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PRINCIPLES
OF
NATURAL THEOLOGY.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

CHRISTIAN THEISM:

**THE TESTIMONY OF REASON AND REVELATION
TO THE EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER
OF THE SUPREME BEING.**

BEING THE BURNETT PRIZE TREATISE.

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PRINCIPLES

OF

NATURAL THEOLOGY.

BY

ROBERT ANCHOR THOMPSON, M.A.

"The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead."

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PREFACE.

THIS work is an inquiry into the origin of our knowledge of the Being and Attributes of the Deity. It professes to demonstrate that this knowledge is a product of the spontaneous action of the Mind, but can be verified on strict principles of Reason.

Its *Method* of argument is that which I have already employed in a larger treatise ; where I also discussed the principal theories of Atheism, and some of the modern objections to the Theism of the Sacred Scriptures. The present work is confined to the positive argument, and aims at stating it more systematically, and under a form in which, I believe, it will not be difficult for the attentive reader to follow the connexion of the parts, and to see the purpose of the whole.

The want of such an argument, strictly and formally applied to establish the full doctrine of Theism, will be

admitted by those who are acquainted with the questions raised by Atheists, or with the history of speculative philosophy. It will be doubted by many, and by Theists as well as Atheists, whether such an argument be possible. But this scepticism, however unfounded, is one which only time can confute. The possibility of a progress of philosophy will be shown by the progress itself: and it may, one day, prove to have been an epoch in human progress, when the Reason came to an understanding with itself on the questions and difficulties, which had long obscured its relations to Religion. But however this may be, the distrust of Reason, shown whether by the Theist or by the Atheist, which represents the highest truths as open to unanswerable objections, or as discredited by a close analysis, can be nothing less than an indignity to human intellect, and a scepticism of the Divine Wisdom. The faculties fitted for the pursuit of truth, and the aspirations directed to its attainment, have been imparted by that same Marvellous Wisdom, which has ordered all things, and adapted all things to their position in the universe.

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PRINCIPLES
OF
NATURAL THEOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

1. It is proposed, in the present work, to examine the character of our knowledge of the Supreme Being, to define its limits, and to inquire into the intellectual principles on which it rests.

2. It might have been expected that a truth so momentous as the Being of God, ^{Scepticism.} would long since have been out of controversy; or, at least, that its principles would have been ascertained, and its conclusions defined with a certainty and exactness, which would have placed it beyond question with men of intelligence. Yet it is, perhaps, as much disputed at the present as at any former time.

It may be true that avowed atheists have always been few. But there is a vague feeling, neither uncommon nor without influence, that the truth and the

evidences of Theism hang in the greatest uncertainty, and cannot be placed beyond dispute by any reasoning.

Unsettled
state of
Theology.

3. Nor can this scepticism be fairly met, till theists shall have come nearer to a general agreement among themselves. That they are, as yet, widely at variance, is known to every one who has gone from their facts to their principles.

Some affirm that the great truth must be believed, but cannot be proved. But belief must be supported by reason. It is evident that some reason is required for believing one thing rather than another.

Of those who render account of their belief, some have recourse to one kind of demonstration, some to another. But what may be the exact force, what the limits of the conclusion to be drawn from each, what the relation of the various proofs to one another,—whether each has its own department in the theistic evidence, or each is all-sufficient for the whole truth,—on these questions there is no agreement. Multitudes of books have been written on Natural Theology; few define the exact limit of their conclusions; fewer still aim at establishing the known truth in all its fulness, or seek to follow back to their source the intellectual principles on which it rests.

May be
remedied.

4. To be satisfied with this uncertainty, because it has continued so long,—to think that reason can never come to an understanding with itself, must be a scepticism both of reason, and of its Author.

Human reason, it is true, is finite. But it is not imbecile. It is finite, and must admit that there is much beyond its compass. It is not so imbecile, that it cannot see whether a thing is beyond it or not. Knowledge does not come by hap-hazard, but rests on fixed principles and processes of nature. These principles and processes are partly known, and the extent of our knowledge of them may be defined. There are limits to the range of the intellect, beyond which all must be unknown : but to be limits at all, they must be accessible on the one side. The reason is not so blind that it can never hope to see them, though it look for them ; nor perceive whether it is near them or not. A man need not run against stone walls, unless he choose to go with his eyes shut, however ignorant he may be of what is beyond them.

5. The purpose and method of the present work are widely different from those which have hitherto been followed. It is designed to show,—

Purpose of
this work.

That man's knowledge of God is as natural and fundamental as his knowledge of other men, and of the material world ; that it is of the same character, and rests on a like foundation ; that it is gained by means of the same faculties, and in similar spontaneous applications of those faculties ; and, consequently, that it has equal claims to be received as valid and unquestionable.

CHAPTER II.

FINAL CAUSES.

1. The famous and popular argument from the arrangements of the Universe, will generally be the first which occurs to the reflecting mind, when it seeks to account for its acquired belief in God. This argument may be kept clear of the metaphysical difficulties which have gathered around the foundations of Natural Theology. Its conclusion has also a certain completeness in itself, though it reach not to the whole doctrine of Theism.

For these reasons, it will be proper to place it first in order. If speculative questions be unavoidable, it is important to know how far we can advance without them.

2. The facts of nature on which this argument rests, are obvious and innumerable. They cover the surface of the Universe, and reach beyond us, in its depths. The great *cosmical*

arrangements of the whole, the *unities of plan* in the construction of the parts, the *adaptations to ends* manifested in every department of nature,—adaptations so striking, that even the atheist cannot avoid calling them designs,—such, under three distinct heads, are the data on which it proceeds. The world is full of them to the common eye that observes, and they extend from the immensities of the telescope above us, to the infinitesimals of the microscope beneath our feet; and from the order and adaptations we see to-day, through the plans of a million years, of which the records are engraven on the rocks of our globe.

From these marks of order and adaptation, it is concluded that a Presiding Mind has ordered and arranged all things with intelligence.

We shall briefly indicate some departments of the evidence, before we inquire into the force and the principles of the argument, which are the same in each department.

3. The *Order of the universe* is manifested by all the sciences, in all their branches, in the simplest facts of observation, and through the most recondite mathematical reasonings.

Order.

Astronomy makes known the all-pervading laws of the universe, and discovers the conditions which were requisite for the establishment, and the stability of the solar system. Given the several bodies of the system, it is demonstrably millions of millions to one that its formation was not the result of chance.

Chymistry bears a similar testimony, in discovering to us the constitution of the worlds themselves, and especially of this world of ours. Various *distinct substances* are required, which must have their specific properties and relations to one another, and must be given in due proportions, and brought within certain conditions of space, and otherwise. The chance of the accidental formation of a world from several unknown substances, must be infinitely less than the inconceivably small chance of a stable solar system, after the worlds are given.

The evidences of order are continued throughout the sciences of *vegetable and animal physiology*, in the relations of organised bodies to the universe, and their dependence on one another. The existence of the organised world is dependent on systems of causes in the unorganised, which extend to the sun in distance, and go back through thousands of ages for their commencement. The plant has its relations to the sun, and to the arrangements of the solar system. The air and the soil which nourish it have been formed under agencies, or, at least, subjected to influences, which must have proved destructive to all the germs of organised life, if they had existed. The system of *meteorology* depends on the cosmical laws, and on the properties of air and water and other substances. It is a stable mechanism of natural agents, by which the wants of the vegetable world are every where supplied.

The animal world is no less dependent on the vege-

table than this on the unorganised. And here the order of creation is extended throughout the regions of sensation and thought. The organs of sensation are exactly adapted to the world without; the mental faculties of sensibility and reason bear relations, equally distinct and constant, to the powers of the organs; and, with the other faculties, are both fitted to attain a knowledge of the material world, and give to man a wonderfully constructed moral world of his own.

4. Not only is order thus manifested in the universal frame, and in its various parts, but also in the *marks of rule and type* and the *unities of plan*, which have governed the construction of the parts and of the whole. In astronomy, we have many worlds revolving round the sun, under conditions in several respects very similar to our own. In chymistry, the laws of combination are ruled by number and quantity, and with greater exactness than any weights or measures of the chymist or the manufacturer. The vegetable and animal kingdom also affords remarkable instances of numerical relation, and of unity of plan. Of these last, that which has of late become the most notable, is the plan which governs the formation of all vertebrate animals,—a unity of construction evident to the most cursory observer, but which has become so much more significant under the eyes of a great master of comparative anatomy.

5. Thus the order of the universe is two-fold. Plans of order have governed the

Unity of
plan.

Designs.

processes of construction ; a universe of order is the result. We have yet to notice the *special adaptations* to ends, which have sprung forth in all directions from the plans of construction, and cover the universe as it exists. These adaptations have sometimes been made the principal basis of Natural Theology. Especially in the departments of organised nature, the principle of special adaptation is so universal, as, in the hands of the physiologist, to have become the loadstone which has guided to many great discoveries.

These appearances of order, of plan, and of design in nature, form the subject of many excellent treatises. And though each separate instance has its own weight, and each gives the same conclusion as the whole, yet, to feel the evidences of Theism in their proper force, more especially to gain worthy ideas of Creative Wisdom, it is necessary to be familiar with the numerous evidences, which are found in all the departments of nature.

Of these arrangements and adaptations of nature, many are obvious to the most uninstructed observer. The peasant is as competent as the philosopher, to see that the things in heaven and the things in earth wonderfully conspire to clothe the world in beauty, and to draw forth from it the food for the service of man. The peasant is sometimes the more disposed to see, in these arrangements of things, the agency of a Wise Designer. The facts of the philosopher are more numerous, and varied, and exact ; but those of the peasant

are more impressive to him; and the conclusion rests on precisely the same principles in either case.

It is our first question—What is the value of this conclusion? Is it a mere fiction of the vulgar mind, which the philosopher may set aside as beneath him? or is it a reasonable and certain conclusion, which no knowledge, no advancement of man, can ever weaken or discredit?

6. The *order* of the universe is *undeniable*, though we have not attempted to define where order begins and chaos ends. The owner of millions is rich, though we cannot define at what particular penny a man ceases to be poor. Does this order manifest the agency of Mind? If it do, then the unities of plan will give some information respecting the manner of His agency. It is found that, amid all the complexities of the world, there is no waste of power, no superfluous contrivance. The Supreme Intelligence makes no useless display of ingenuity, but takes the shortest means to His ends, and only diverges from the general plan for the sake of the special adaptation.

Definition
of order
not neces-
sary.

These adaptations are as unquestionable as the general order, though design be equally incapable of definition. That mistaken assumptions may have provoked the cavils of the sceptic, can, in no degree, weaken the evidence to be drawn from the concurrence of the numerous and delicate adaptations and adjustments which meet, for instance, in the eye or ear of

man, nor weaken the conviction that the eye was made to see, and the ear to hear.

7. However the atheist may seek to evade the theistic conclusion, on the plea of Interpretation of order, &c. questioning scepticism, yet he is limited to one of three hypotheses. Either the matter of the world has arranged itself, or it has been arranged by some power superior to it, and this power must be either intelligent or unintelligent.

But matter cannot have arranged itself according to settled plans, to give the endless adaptations of nature, or the one harmonious whole.

For it is not one being only, but *a class of beings*. In all human knowledge it is, and must be, a system of diverse substances. This is an ultimate fact of all knowledge of the material.

To suppose these substances, in virtue of some latent power of reason, to have taken counsel together to produce the universe, is plainly absurd.

To suppose them to have fallen into their order by accident, has been already seen to be equally absurd. The universe is a unity of diversities. Even for one of its simplest arrangements, it was many millions to one against the combination arising by chance; and for the more complex, the chance is still farther beyond the bounds of possibility.

We require then some arranging power superior to the world; whether, in any sense, residing in it, or above it, must depend on other considerations. The

question now is, Can this power be known to be intelligent?

Now, at least, it is impossible to avoid the admission, that if it be not so, yet every thing is ordered as if it were. If it were known to be most intelligent, and most wise, we cannot conceive that it could have given us more wonderful manifestations of itself, than we have in ourselves and in the world.

It is possible certainly to imagine, however unmeaningly, that the diverse material substances have been brought together, and drawn into their order and association by some unknown cause, which cannot be affirmed to be intelligent.

8. Some physical theorists have thought they found indications of such an unintel- Cosmogony.
ligent modelling of nature in the geological records. Because we seem to be carried back to a primæval fire, it is suggested that, for the astronomical conditions of the stability of the solar system, the happy chance of so many may have originated in a physical cosmogony. But the hypothesis, if true, in no way alters the case. It only carries us farther back in search of the cause of order. A manufacturer may draw an endless variety of fabrics from his mill or furnace. The work may be done by machinery or by fire; but that any useful fabric may be brought out, there must be contrivance in the materials supplied; and the nature of the fabric will vary with the nature of the raw material, as well as with the process of manufacture.

The two cases are evidently parallel to the extent of our argument.

So, again, the chymical, and other conditions of the formation of worlds, may be conjectured to have been fulfilled, in the subsidence of matter from the stupendous caldron of a cosmogony. Still, for the formation of a world like ours, the proper substances were to be thrown into the caldron, in the due proportions; and the process was to be conducted under certain conditions, for the production of the requisite articles of manufacture—for such, in fact, are the substances which compose our globe—as well as for the formation of this world of earth and air and water, of hill and dale, of land and sea, of metals and minerals and soils.

It is needless to dwell on the inconsistencies between every possible hypothesis of this kind, and the facts of the case. It is enough, that, whatever changes and transformations may have been wrought by fire, no material substance or property can have arisen out of nothing. If matter can have gained from nothing any new powers which it had not, it may have gained all its properties, and so its whole existence, in the same manner; and we are involved in the absurdity of a self-creation.

The hypothesis of the origination of life in matter, and of intelligence in living beings, leads to the same result; unless it be granted that matter was the depository of the vital powers, or rather germs; and then,

to whatever period we may go back, we have like varieties of powers under different manifestations, and the problem will be ever recurring in the same form,—Must not that Power be Intelligent which has given unity to the diversity? Must not that Power be wielded by Wisdom, which has disposed things so entirely as if it were?

9. A similar answer will hold good if the atheist seek refuge, not in the distant geological ages, but in the hidden depths of present existence. He may admit the diversities of matter, and the unity of an arranging power, but may imagine this power to lie in the depths of material existence; and may argue that it should be assumed to be mechanical, because we cannot see its intelligence. Unknown Causes.

There may be truth in this hypothesis. It is conceivable, and, for all we can know, possible, that the material world has its present existence in itself, independently of any continued agency of a Superior Being. That existence then surpasses our understanding. The causes or powers of nature are seen only in their results. Science can follow them backward through but two or three steps of their prior action. It can never penetrate to their foundations: it can never trace them to their source.

But we can know, from the world we see, that Intelligence must have presided at the laying of those foundations. We can know that Intelligence must have so constituted, or so directed the powers of being at their

source, that they should issue forth to the production of that world of harmony and order, in which they are manifested to the eye of man. We know, by the work it does, that a machine has been constructed with skill and purpose, though we may not understand its construction.

Thus to whatever depth of being the imagination may take flight, the unknown in being, like the distant in time, ever contains the causes or foundations of the world of order and adaptation, which is present and known. Thus the question, though shifted, is not changed. If the One Cause of order must be intelligent, when it is in immediate relation to the visible arrangements, the necessity of acknowledging its intelligence is not diminished, by supposing it removed to a distance.

Intention,
or Chance. 10. When it has been seen that the order, the plans, the arrangements of the universe, cannot have originated in chance, it has been seen that they must have sprung from intelligence. In the collocation of many individual things, *there is no alternative between intention and chance*. When chance has been excluded, there is no alternative to intention; neither in any natural necessity, or fate, nor yet in any unknown and incomprehensible power of nature.

Necessity. 11. Not in fate. For a power of nature ordering all things of necessity, must overrule every accident and every intention. So that any question between accident and intention remains pre-

cisely where it was. The atheist will not demand proof of this position. For his scheme of human fatalism embraces all the purposes of reason, and all the accidents of life.

12. Nor yet in some unknown power of nature. This, indeed, is a common figment of the atheist. And naturally, for it is his last resource. To discover mind in nature, is to solve the mystery of the universe. He pauses in silence before it, and makes no arrogant pretension to understand it.

Unknown
Causes.

But at all events, things are ordered *as if* by Wise Intelligence; both in the powers of the world without, and in those of the mind within. Is it not probable, then, that the principle of adaptation, which is every where manifest, extends to the mind's faculty of recognising, in the order of nature, the agency of an intelligence like its own?

And to what is atheism driven, when it refuses to acknowledge this intelligent agency? To some unknown and incomprehensible power. But order, unity of construction, adaptation to ends, are what must have been shown in the action of mind: they are the expressions of its ordinary thoughts. And their presence in nature is unquestionable. So then this unknown, incomprehensible power, is not intelligent; but manifests itself in all things, as if it were. What, then, is the difference between a conclusion of this kind, and an assertion that some gas has been discovered, with all the properties of oxygen, and no other properties, which

yet is not oxygen ; or a solid with all the properties of gold, and no other, which yet is not gold ?

The arrangements of the Universe are as much objects of human knowledge, as are the properties of gold or oxygen. And we shall find that the knowledge of existing things never reaches beyond the *manifestations* of causes or powers which are in themselves unknown, but are known and measured by the *phænomena*. Such is the condition of all our knowledge of being. But of this more hereafter.

And after all, what is gained by this figment of an unknown, incomprehensible power of nature, which is not intelligent, but shows all the marks of intelligence ? That which is utterly unknown, if it interfere at all in combining and arranging the substances of nature, will be as likely to dispose them in any one of their possible combinations, as in any other. So that we have not advanced a step beyond the region of chance. We must choose, therefore, between chance and intelligence.

Knowledge
of human
agency.

13. But arguments of this kind need not be pressed. Our present position is independent of them, and will be made good by showing that *the Disposing Intelligence of nature is recognised by man on precisely the same ground, and in the same manner, in which he recognises every intelligence beyond himself*. It is this parity of reasoning which makes the argument complete, without discussion of its principles.

The knowledge of the existence of other men is

wholly different, in kind, from the knowledge of oneself. Man knows himself by introspection. He has an immediate consciousness of his own thoughts and feelings and purposes.

He can have no such immediate consciousness of any other existing being. The knowledge that men like himself exist around him, is an inference, spontaneous indeed, but still an inference, from observation through the senses. The knowledge of mind, which he gains in inward consciousness, man carries beyond himself to the interpretation of the facts of life. He infers the existence of other minds, from the manifestations of their intelligence in their works or words.

14. In the order of a well-arranged garden of trees and flowers and lawn and walks,— Examples.
in the adjustments of a piece of mechanism, as a watch, he instinctively recognises marks of intelligence. Wind and water may have formed the soil and gravel of the garden: the sun and air support the life of the trees and flowers. But the arrangements of these things cannot have arisen from such natural causes. They discover an intelligence subordinate to the powers of nature. And so of the watch.

His conclusion is similar, and on precisely similar evidence, when he recognises the agency of Mind in the order and adaptations of the world. Mind, in either case, is the only adequate cause of a particular form and arrangement of certain distinct substances. It is at least as unlikely that any natural forces, residing in

material substances, should have gone on to marshal these substances in a world of order, or in the exquisite adjustments of the eye; as that the winds and floods which have rolled the gravel and deposited the soil in ages past, should have gone on to lay out the garden with its beds and gravel walks, or to form the wheels and construct the mechanism of the watch.

Objection. 15. To this reasoning it may be objected,

—“But we know by experience that the natural productions of the world never do arrange themselves in the order of a garden, or of a watch. We do not know, by experience, whether they can have arranged themselves in the order of the world.

“We know by experience that men lay out gardens, and make watches from the materials supplied to them by nature. We have seen their action in other cases, and therefore infer it, where we do not see it.

“But in the question of the formation of worlds, we have no experience to guide us.”

Answer. 16. Granted: you know that plants and grasses and pebbles were never arranged in

the order of a garden, by any physical forces of nature. But not till you have learnt that men are something more than mere automata, transmitting these physical forces to their action; not till you have learnt that they are moved by intelligence like your own.

You know by experience that men lay out gardens and make watches. But you have first learnt to recognise them as intelligent. Whence have you gained this

prior knowledge? Clearly from manifestations of their intelligence in the world, similar in kind to those seen in the garden or in the watch.

The faculty of speech is one means, by which especially the knowledge of beings like itself, is discovered to the opening mind in infancy. And the language of man, as an instance of arrangement, may aptly be compared to the work of Creation. "By the Word of God were the heavens made."

Numerous sounds, distinct and indistinct, may be uttered by the human voice. Certain elementary sounds are to be selected and combined in words; and the words disposed under numerous conditions of grammar, and of sense, for the construction of sentences; and the sentences to be joined together so as to give a unity of meaning to the whole, and the particular purpose to all the parts. If we compare a connected discourse with a series of any possible elementary sounds, we know that many forms of speech are possible, and several may be equally good for the expression of the same thought. But we see also that the possible combinations of sound, which convey no sense, are infinitely more numerous.

The case is similar to that of the unity in diversities which we see in nature. And the conclusion is the same, when we recognise intelligence as the cause of unity.

17. The case of Atheism is that of a man Theism and who has spent his life in a large deserted Atheism. island, and has never seen nor conversed with beings

like himself. He must be supposed in the full possession and use of all the faculties of man, and accustomed to contrive, and dispose things, for his own welfare and convenience. At length, he finds himself wandering in a garden, which is laid out in straight walks, and beds of regular figure, and trees happily disposed, and flowers harmoniously arranged. He reflects on the scene around him. "These are indications of design and plan, such as I have not seen before in nature. Things are here disposed, as if by intelligence like my own. But I know no intelligence beyond myself. Nature is wonderfully ordered by her eternal laws. But in the faculties of thought and purpose, I stand apart from nature and alone. These arrangements, so similar to works of my own, are yet no proof of thought and purpose in any other. They may have sprung from powers of nature, quite unknown to me. Mind, out of myself, could not be discovered even if it exists: for I could never extend to another the inward consciousness which recognises myself."

The case of Theism is that of a man who reasons very differently in the same circumstances. "I find here the natural productions with which I am familiar, disposed in a remarkable form of order. These walks and beds and trees cannot have been thus arranged without intention. I have here evidences of an intelligence, whose plans are similar to my own. Does the possessor of this intelligence in any other respect resemble myself? Without further evidence I cannot tell. But of

this, at least, I can have no doubt. Whatever may be the nature, in other respects, of the power which is seen in these arrangements, the arrangements themselves manifest that power to be intelligent¹."

18. We may now define the limits of the conclusion which may strictly be drawn from this argument of Natural Theology. Conclusion.

It establishes our knowledge of Intelligent Power, as the Cause of the order and adaptations of the world ; but, in its usual application, manifests a Wise Architect, rather than a Supreme Creator.

But it gives us no information concerning the manner of existence of that Power ;—whether, for instance, as, in any sense, residing in the hidden powers of the known universe, or distinct from them. Only it is superior, as ruling and disposing them, and this, to the limits of our knowledge of them.

The argument leads to no knowledge concerning the mode of action, in which the purposes of Intelligence have been impressed upon the known world.

It cannot even establish with strictness, that the Intelligent Power which ordered things still governs them ; and may not have been transient in action, or in being, like the agency of any human designer. The order of spaces unfathomable, the plans of ages unnum-

¹ It is, in fact, easier to see the marks of Mind in nature, when we are familiar with them in men. But this, and other defects of the illustration, are of no consequence to our argument.

bered, the designs of depths unsearchable, suggest, but cannot reach the Infinite.

It does not solve the question of Divine Liberty or Necessity. Intelligent purpose governs the arrangements of the world, and is thus the motive to their production. But whether that Purpose becomes efficient with a human liberty of choice, or is determined by any moral or other previous and predominating necessity, is, thus far, unknown.

Nor yet does it discover to what extent the Mind which we recognise in nature is, in other attributes, similar to our own.

On these questions, and on the last especially, we may hope to be farther informed, by extended observation of the designs of nature, and closer examination of the unavoidable conditions of all our knowledge.

Meantime our conclusion must be limited, lest it lose the force it really has, by vain pretensions to what it has not.

Agency of
Mind in
matter. 19. Thus, even the strictest conclusion
from final causes annihilates every theory of
materialism.

Men often cling hard to the belief, that material substance has a reality about it, which mind has not. And they are not always convinced by the appeal to the first principles of our knowledge of both mind and matter.

The mind has but a few years' experience of life in itself. It finds matter in time-honoured possession in

the universe, with an established title of a million years, and records which defy the special pleadings of speculation. It sees, too, the extent and variety of the sciences which relate to matter, or to the material organisms of living beings, and has but a narrow sphere of science within itself.

But it forgets, perhaps, to observe, that its very faculties which discover the existence of any material substance, discover along with it, and with the same certainty, those marks of order, plan, and adaptation, which are the records of Intelligent Agency, never absent from this substance; and that it is this very order, and plan, and adaptation, which furnish the subject-matter of all the physical sciences.

Sceptics tell us that it is an extravagant ambition of our faculties to seek a God over all.

Yet do not these faculties discover the adjustments of material substances in the world with as much certainty as they discover the existence of the substances themselves? If mind can recognise, in material phænomena, the existence of what is so different from it as matter, surely it must be competent to discover, in the adjustments of these phænomena, the existence of what is so similar to itself.

Material substance is one thing; the material world is another. It is the world, with all its wonders, which is seen to have existed these million years.

It is not bare matter that can be known to have existed so long, but matter stamped with the seal, and

written all over with the handwriting of Mind. This very handwriting is what proves its antiquity, and needs so many sciences for its interpretation. Of itself, matter is no more than the unknown cause of sensations and phænomena. Of itself it could never tell us that it had existed a single day.

CHAPTER III.

DOCTRINE OF ONE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE.

THE true conclusion from the argument of the preceding chapter falls short of the full doctrine of Theism. It does not establish that the Supreme Disposer must also be the Creator of all things, and is Himself eternal and infinite.

The present chapter will contain an inquiry into the extent of possible knowledge on the doctrine of creation.

It may readily be conjectured that, to the limits of man's research, nature bears testimony to a Creator, and not a mere Architect of the world. The adjustments which manifest the Presiding Intelligence are evident on the surface of things visible, but are not confined to the surface. They are not, like any human designs, mere arrangements of pre-existing materials, as in the case of a building; nor, as in that of the tele-

graph, applications of natural powers, which man may elicit and direct. The adjustments of the universe may be traced, beneath the surface, to relations depending on all the powers and properties in which things are known to exist,—and this, to whatever extent we may follow them.

AXIOM.—Our knowledge of the nature of any being can never go beyond its relational properties or powers.

It is a prime condition of all knowledge of external things that it is *relational* to the mind. Thus the material world is known through sensation; and the character of all knowledge of it depends upon the perception-faculty, and on the properties of the nerves, as much as on its own nature. There is no truth on which philosophers of all schools, and of all shades of opinion, are more nearly agreed, than that all knowledge is under the condition of relativity to the mind.

But it is not so generally observed that it depends on the *relations* of different parts, or powers, or properties, *in the external objects themselves*. Every material object is a combination of separable parts of the same substance. The immediate properties of sensation, as hardness, roughness, often result from the arrangements of these parts; or sometimes also from relations to other agents of nature, as colour from relations to light. The chymical properties or powers of any substance become known only through its relation to other sub-

stances. Thus matter is known in its relations to the mind, and in the relations of its different parts and kinds.

Of itself, also, the mind can have no knowledge, except in its faculties ; nor of its faculties, except in their action ; nor of their action, except in relation to the world it lives in. It has, indeed, in inward consciousness, a more intimate acquaintance with its own powers, and their connexion with one another, than it has with those of any material substance. But it cannot trace the mysterious processes of nature through which these faculties were first awakened to being, and in which lies the source of their continual life.

PROP. I.—All knowledge of the finite is a knowledge of diversities.

This proposition follows immediately from the foregoing axiom. Knowledge is always relational, and at least two beings are included in every relation. Material bodies, as extended, can never be known as free from the diversity of multiplicity. The chymical properties of a body are known only in its relations to other bodies ; and in the *differences* between the properties of different substances, in the same relation. And the diversity of mind and object is manifestly irreducible. Their relation in every perception is an ultimate and inexplicable fact, and is the foundation of all knowledge. Thus all knowledge is of diversities.

But it may perhaps be thought that, though diver-

sity is the obvious character of our first knowledge of things, yet, since the mind is able, by observation, comparison, and induction, to carry up many phænomena, or many powers, to a unity of being; it may, at length, in the progress of science, succeed in reducing all the phænomena of the universe to the existence of *one material agent*.

The mind combines several perceptions in the knowledge of *one material body*. The chymical properties of *one agent* of nature, in its relations to other agents, are often sufficient causes of many diverse phænomena. The innumerable compound substances of nature have been resolved into a very few chymical simples. May not science at length succeed in "reducing all that is perceived by the senses to the unity of a *single principle*?"

But even if such an achievement of science can be conceived possible, and if we omit all consideration of the fundamental difference between mind and object; yet it is evident that the supposed universal element can become known, only as all chymical substances are known, by comparison of diverse phænomena. Consequently, this one substance must possess a diversity of powers in itself; and must, in different parts of space, or under other diversities of circumstances or modalities, of whatever kind, exist with different determinations of its essential powers. If all *chymical* diversities could be reduced to one element, it could only be through observation of this element in other irreducible diversities.

Hence the parts of the universal element, in their various determinations, must, to the limits of possible knowledge, be considered as so many distinct substances.

SCHOLIUM.—It might be stated, as an axiom, that the condition of diversity is essential to the attainment of knowledge. It is evident that all nature, material and mental, is a manifestation of diverse phænomena, properties, powers, and their various relations to one another. The knowledge of any one body comprises diverse phænomena, discovered through different senses. If knowledge were attainable through one sense only, diversity in the objects acting upon its organ, would be an essential condition of their becoming known. Without diversity the attention would never be excited, nor the mind awakened to the intellectual act of perception. If the mind, with all its faculties, can be conceived existing in a world of one unchanging sensation, it is obvious that its knowledge of that world could never go beyond the cognition, that something existed different in nature from itself.

It is shown, in the above proposition, that diversity of objects is not only a condition essential to the *attainment* of knowledge, but also a condition of *all knowledge possible* to man.

PROP. II.—Mind and matter are, both of them, in their ultimate nature unknown.

It will generally be admitted, without question, that

all our knowledge rests upon the unknown. The physical observer, who restricts knowledge to phænomena, does not mean to deny all existence beyond phænomena, but to place it out of the sphere of man.

Or, if not admitted, the proposition follows immediately from the axiom. Knowledge is always of relations. But the relations of things are not the things themselves. And the ultimate causes, in each substance, which give the different phænomena,—why, for instance, of material substances, one is solid, another fluid, another gaseous at the same temperatures; in minds, what are the causes of the varieties of intellect and disposition, are unknown ¹.

Sometimes the immediate causes of phænomena are discoverable, as that sound is produced by waves of the air, light by waves of ether. Yet our knowledge of the air, or of the ether, evidently goes no farther than certain relations and differences between these and other bodies, and cannot reach their real, intrinsic nature.

¹ Mr. John Mill (Logic, vol. i. p. 81, 2nd ed.) admits the definition of Body, that it is “the *hidden* external cause to which we refer our sensations.” This definition may be made to give the two following axioms,—

I. Matter, as the hidden cause of sensations, is known to exist.

II. Precisely the same principle of Reason by which we apprehend its existence, as the cause of sensations, compels us to admit its hidden diversities, as the causes of the diversities of sensation.

These two axioms are a sufficient basis for the arguments of the present chapter.

PROP. III.—There is a Real or Absolute to all phænomena.

It will generally be allowed that there is a present source, or root, or foundation of the existence of every being, independent of any superior agency or existence; that is, that there is, somewhere, an *absolute* origin of all the powers of being. The atheist generally seeks to confine the Real to the material world; but feels the necessity of admitting, that there is a Real, somewhere, beneath the phænomenal. The idealist places the Real in mind, and makes the material world a mere vision of the intellect. The pantheist merges all existence in the Deity; and the theist may do the same, and be no pantheist, provided he reserve the independence of the human will. All must admit, that there is, somewhere, an absolute present origin of all phænomena.

Or, if this proposition be denied, it is demonstrable, as follows²:—

For, if there be no Absolute, then the immediate causes of all sensations, and of all the phænomena of external relations, must depend upon causes prior to them in nature,—as the appearances of things upon physical properties, the explosion of two gases upon

² This, and similar proofs in the next chapter, will come to be received as unquestionable. But it may be observed that Natural Theology, though less complete without them, does not fall to the ground. This will be evident enough, except perhaps to those who read with no better purpose than to find objections. (See end of next chapter.)

their chymical properties,—and these causes, again, upon prior causes, and so on without end. That is, there must be an infinite number of prior causes of all present phænomena.

But this is absurd, since there can be no such thing as an infinite number. In this assertion we are not beyond the bounds of reason. There is here nothing inconceivable or unintelligible. Number and addition are perfectly intelligible; and it is evident that, though number may be increased without limit by addition, yet it can never become infinite. It may be indefinitely increased, but is essentially finite. An infinite succession of causes is therefore absurd.

Nor is the case altered by the supposition of any *continuous* succession of being. A stream without a fountain head is as impossible as an infinite number, and for the same reason³.

Hence every existing being has, somewhere, its foundation, or root, or source; whether ultimately distinct from that of all other beings, may be unknown.

DEFINITION.—The knowledge that something exists which is unknown in its nature, or that some being has existence beyond our knowledge, may be called a *cognition* of the being, to distinguish it from a knowledge of its nature. Thus we may say of finite things, that we have a cognition of their existence beyond the

³ If it be conceivable that the constant source of phenomena is in *the Infinite without succession*, then this Infinite is the Absolute. The limits of knowledge, on this question, will become evident in what follows.

reach of our knowledge; besides a knowledge of their properties, and distinctive nature.

This distinction deserves to be carefully marked in terms; both from its importance to our method of inquiry, and because, if kept in view, it will go far towards the solution of a very notable controversy in modern philosophy,—that on the doctrine of the Infinite.

PROP. IV.—All knowledge of the finite postulates a cognition of being, unknown in itself, but mediately known by its manifestations.

The Absolute, which has been shown to exist (Prop. III.), is evidently out of relation to the cognition-faculty, and therefore inconceivable.

It is also inconceivable, whether as the Absolute of any one being, out of relation to all others; or, if all beings have the same Absolute, as prior in nature to those diversities, which are the insuperable condition of all knowledge (Prop. I.).

But though the absolute is thus unknown in itself, yet it is mediately known by the phænomena which rest upon it, or flow from it; and may be estimated by these phænomena, since it contains the causes or root of their distinctive character.

In plain terms, whatever we may know of things as phænomena, properties, powers, feelings, effects; we always have a cognition that there exist, beyond our knowledge, a real, a substance, a source, a spring, the

causes. These causes . . . , considered in themselves, are necessarily unknown, but yet may be said to be manifested in their effects, and so mediately known, and estimated by them.

COROL.—Cognition always reaches at least one step beyond knowledge.

PROP. V.—There are diversities of the unknown, corresponding to the diversities of the known.

For all the diversities of nature rest upon the unknown (Prop. IV.), and that unknown must itself be either one or diverse.

But even if all existing things have their present root or source in one, yet the commencement of the diversity is always beyond knowledge. The diversities extend to the limits of possible knowledge (Prop. I.), and there depend upon causes or conditions beyond those limits.

Otherwise.—For though diversity is a condition of all knowledge, yet it is not imposed upon things by the mind, but belongs to the things themselves as much as their existence. It is a condition of existence, essential to the possibility of its becoming known to man.

COROL.—Hence knowledge can never reach the limits of the diverse. Beyond the diverse and known, there is always a diverse and unknown, that is, a finite and unknown: and this, not only because knowledge can

never evade the condition of relativity to the mind, but also because it can never go beyond the relations and differences of outward things, to reach the things themselves.

SCHOLIUM.—If then it can be shown that existence, however otherwise unknown, yet known as finite and diverse, manifests the Existence of the INFINITE ONE; and, known as the foundation of an harmonious universe, manifests that Infinite One, as SUPREME INTELLIGENCE; the atheist will no longer evade the momentous conclusion of Natural Theology, by seeking refuge in the unknown.

EXAMPLE.—Let us consider the character of our knowledge of some one substance, as oxygen. Like all material substances, it can become known only through sensible phænomena. But it could never, like gold or any solid substance, have been perceived by its immediate action on the sensibility. Even if it had occurred unmixed in nature, the effect of breathing it could only have been assigned to some unknown cause.

But it gives rise to phænomena, through its *relation* to other substances. It causes flame with other bodies, at a certain temperature, or, sometimes, as when mixed with hydrogen, an explosion. Still, though its effects are perceived, it is not known without observation and comparison of the *diversities* of phænomena. These effects were seen in every combustion, and attributed to unknown causes, long before the gas was discovered.

But when it was obtained unmixed, the chymist was able to compare the phænomena of its relation to other bodies, with those of any other substance in similar relations. The gas then became known,—as gold is known, as a substance possessing a number of properties, which are invariably found in nature to go together. The unknown causes of combustion were soon ascertained to lie in the relations of the newly discovered gas.

Yet of each of these properties we have no more than a *relative knowledge*. There is a relation of the gas to other substances, to give rise to the outward object of perception (as a flame, e. g.).

And this outward object, again, is known only through its relation to the perception-faculty, nervous and mental. In itself, unperceived by the mind, it is one thing; as *phænomenon-object*, the flame, quite another. Its appearance depends at least as much upon the properties of the nerves, as upon things external to them. Thus all our knowledge of oxygen is of its relational properties, or of its effects in relation to various substances.

But this knowledge carries with it, and must carry with it, a *cognition of certain unknown powers*, which are the causes of these effects,—powers residing in the gas itself, independently of all relation. The gas was an essential and most active element of nature, during ages unnumbered, before its phænomena were manifested to man. It may even have existed during ages, before it was

brought into those relations to other substances, on which its known properties depend⁴.

Thus the knowledge of every relational property postulates a cognition of something prior to it in nature,—something unknown in itself, but which becomes known indirectly, and is estimated by the known phænomena, or properties of relation.

It is true that bodies are sometimes said to be known and distinguished from one another by their powers. And, in a certain sense, rightly so. Not that we have any knowledge of the nature of any power or property, considered in itself, but *of their combination*. Experience shows that the manner of combination of the relational properties is constant. Thus oxygen is known as gaseous, colourless, the almost universal element in combustion, the cause of rust, of acidity, &c. And, therefore, since every such property has its unknown cause, it follows that powers, unknown in themselves, are known to fall into certain natural groups, which we call substances. If it were not so, all knowledge, all experience would be impossible.

And, in accordance with Prop. IV., this knowledge postulates a cognition that there must exist a cause, or basis, of the known combination of powers or properties. This cause must lie either in the unity of

⁴ May there not be active agents in the material world, which can never, by any phenomenon, come within the sphere of our knowledge? Electricity reached it by a single thread during many ages.

being of the substance itself, or in some superior being, or absolute, on which its existence depends.

PROP. VI.—A universe of diversities must consist of substances limited in number, in quantity, in relations, and in the conditions of relation (Modalities).

Whether the ultimate knowables of existing things be certain extended molecules, or pure forces, or whatever they may be, it has been shown (Prop. I.) that they will always be diverse.

Now a universe of diversities must always be finite; since extension and diversity, however indefinitely increased, can never reach the Infinite. It must therefore consist of a limited number of diverse substances, and a limited quantity of each.

Moreover the substances must be limited, or determined, in such a way, as to be capable of meeting and combining in compound substances, and of uniting in one world of order. The harmony of the whole is a result of the various properties of the simple substances⁵.

And besides the relations of things themselves, many conditions are no less requisite,—those of space, for example. If all the substances of nature were given, as they are, but were scattered in dust throughout the boundless space; many conditions must be fulfilled, to

⁵ The Chymical relations of substances have been adduced, as the most obvious, not as embracing all.

bring them together again, in a world like this of ours; —conditions which it might be impossible to satisfy, by any material causations, without another series of geological progressions, as long as that which has elapsed. And, on this supposition, it is easy to see that such a series of changes could never commence of itself.

SCHOLIUM I.—If it can be conceived that infinite varieties of substances exist infinitely in space, it will be found that the argument of the following propositions will be no less applicable, though with some change of terms. The effect of this impossible hypothesis on the result, will be seen below (Prop. X., Schol.).

SCHOLIUM II.—It is evident that many relations and conditions, whether of various substances independent of one another, or of various determinations of the same universal element, were requisite for the formation even of a huge globe of rock; many more for the evolution of all the harmonies of air, earth and water, especially in the meteorological system of the world; many more, for the direction of the physical substances of nature to the formation of the organised bodies of vegetable and animal life; more than all, for the life of perceiving and thinking minds.

For, besides the diverse substances of the material world, we must have others, also, for that of mind; since, in all knowledge, that which knows must be distinct from that which is known. Even if minds be

mere products of organization,—if, with the “dirt-philosophers,” we deny to them the self-existence, that we attribute to the elements of mud and stone,—still, the self-existent universe must have eternally contained the latent causes of their origin. If not self-existent, at least they now exist, with their capacities of knowledge, adapted to a world which is knowable; and, fortunately, are accompanied and waited on by organs, fitted, through many marvellous properties and adaptations, to be the ministers of communication between themselves and the world.

PROP. VII.—The hypothesis of a self-existent universe of diverse substances, postulates the self-existence of many unknown and incomprehensible beings.

For, to the limits of possible knowledge, the substances of the universe are diverse from one another; and must, at those limits, depend upon unknown diversities beyond them (Prop. V.). And the unknown substances must be self-existent in their diversities, because one uniform substance, not subject to the agency of any cause superior to itself, could never give rise to diversity, nor pass from the condition of unchanging uniformity.

COROL.—Hence atheism has no advantage over theism in point of simplicity. To avoid the doctrine of One Incomprehensible Being, it is obliged to postulate the self-existence of many incomprehensibles.

PROP. VIII.—The hypothesis of a self-existent universe assumes the limitations of the diverse substances in number, in quantity, in relations, in modalities, without cause of the limitations.

Where there is a number of diverse things, it is conceivable that there might be many more, and that without limit. And if an indefinite multiplicity, though conceivable, be really impossible, there must be some unknown cause, or something unknown in the nature of things to limit the possibilities of being.

Similarly, it is conceivable that each distinct substance might have existed in any proportion to the others, and in an indefinite number of relations to all the rest, and under an indefinite number of conditions, in space, and otherwise.

But the universe must consist of diverse substances, limited in number, relation, and so on (Prop. VI.).

And yet there is no cause of the limitations. For there is none superior to the universe; since it is self-existent, and the atheistic hypothesis denies the existence of any being superior to it.

And there is none in the universe itself: since its self-existence belongs to its diverse substances, and no one of these can contain within itself any cause of the limitations of the others. Consequently the whole can contain no such cause.

That is, the hypothesis postulates that certain unknown substances exist necessarily in certain diversities,

and proportions, with certain relations to one another, and combined under certain conditions; without cause of these innumerable limitations and relations.

COROL.—Hence every system of atheism must attribute the formation of the universe to a *fictitious chance*.

If it be allowed that the substances which are actually found to exist, contain within themselves all the possibilities of existence, still the *combination* of the substances can only be the result of chance. The known bodies of the world can be seen to be capable of endless forms of disorder, for one of order. And they are found in a marvellous form of order. Now no necessities of existence, belonging to distinct beings, can account for the relations and the harmony of those beings. But *coincidences* of events, resulting from distinct chains of causation, are sometimes said to arise by chance. It is this order of the *given substances*, which systems of atheism have generally ascribed to the chances of eternity.

But these systems smuggle in, with their chance, the assumption that a certain number of substances exist necessarily, in certain proportions, and under certain relations to one another. And this, their greatest absurdity, often passes without notice. *Given* all the substances of nature *as they are*, we may talk, however absurdly, of the chance of a certain arrangement. But atheism is yet more irrational: for it conceals, under the word chance, its inability to assign any cause or causes of their existence as they are.

And Reason demands a cause of the relations of things, no less than of their present existence. The hypothesis of their eternity avoids the absurdity of self-creation, but it overlooks the equal absurdity of self-adaptation. It can, at the best, be stated to be a fortunate chance, that the substances which are found to be self-existent, exist in a diversity neither too great nor too small for the construction of a world of knowledge, and in the due proportions, and under such relations as are requisite for their combination and order.

But this is a mere fictitious chance, beyond even the most vague usage of the word. Whether it be a word of any real (objective) signification, or have no meaning except with reference to our knowledge, or our ignorance, we need not here inquire. Many writers maintain that *there can be no such thing as chance in nature*; because every event must have its previous causes determined in their nature, and in all their conditions; and every concurrence of events must have its concurrent causes, *determined contemporaneously* in the condition of time, as well as in the system of all the causes of the universe.

But, however this be, it will easily be seen that the word always assumes the existence of certain causes, which are at least partly known; except in this hypothesis of atheism, which carries it up to an application, beyond all causes or conditions of existence.

This conclusion will hold good, however the substances of nature may be unknown. It rests on the

admitted fact of their existence; and on the impossibility, if we admit no Superior Cause, of reducing their diversities and multiplicities to a unity.

Thus atheism seeks, in vain, to elude the truth of Theism, by postulating a Chaos of unknown causes; or by silently admitting it as possible. Unless there be One Cause of order, the diversity of self-existent causes can only be united by chance: that is, since chance, in this application, is an unmeaning term, must be eternally independent, and out of all relation to one another.

PROP. IX.—A Supreme Intelligence is the only alternative of the fictitious chance.

For whatever necessities of being may be allowed to the substances of nature, it must be accidental, that the several unknown necessities coexist, and tend to one result,—the formation of the universe; unless some Superior Cause combine the subordinate causes in one: that is, unless the theory of existence postulate some one unknown cause of all the limitations and relations of existing substances, or of the various determinations of one universal element.

That One Cause must be Mind.

For Mind is that which acts with Intelligent Purpose. And that Cause acts with intelligent purpose, which chooses, or determines, the one form of order, from the millions of millions,—or rather the endless forms of disorder, which were possible with the same, or similar original elements. That Cause acts with purpose,

which, of things possible in innumerable ways, takes the number of elements requisite to a certain end ; and of each the quantity requisite to the same end ; and all under an inconceivable number of relations to one another, requisite to the same end ; and, of innumerable conditions, under those which are requisite to the same end. Much more is the purpose indisputable, if it can be recognized by similar marks, not only in the construction of the whole, but in endless adjustments of the parts.

Hence, however the Supreme Mind may differ, in other respects, from that of man, it is seen to be thus far similar, in that it acts with purpose. To ascribe the visible evidences of purpose to unknown causes, is an error of precisely the same kind, only far more flagrant in extent, than to ascribe the consecutive sounds of language to unknown causes, and the combination of the sounds to chance, or to nothing ; and to deny the existence of any intelligence beyond oneself.

PROP. X.—The Supreme Mind is the Creator, and not only the Disposer, or the Architect of the known universe.

For to determine all the relations and modalities of things, is to determine their existence, so far as existence can be known to man ; since knowledge can never go beyond relational properties and modalities, though these may extend far beyond our knowledge.

And to determine the number and quantity of existing

substances, is to determine their existence, to the limits of finite Being; and, consequently, beyond the limits of knowledge.

Hence the Supreme Intelligence has directed the creation, and not merely the arrangement, of all things known or knowable.

SCHOLIUM.—The preceding propositions assume (Prop. VI. Schol. I.) that diverse substances do not exist infinitely in number, space, &c. The necessity of this assumption depends on the impossibility of an infinite number. But, whether it be received or not, it is important to note, that it, in no way, affects the evidence of the Supreme Mind *selecting* and ordering, if not creating, all things with purpose. When this truth has been admitted, few or none will be disposed to postulate an infinite number of finite beings.

PROP. XI.—If nothing can be known of the world beyond phænomena, there must still be a Creator of phænomena.

This proposition must not be expected to have any meaning by itself, but to be the answer to nonsensical theories on their own assumptions. It passes over the argument of the preceding propositions, to meet a shallow empiricism, which would preclude the argument of Natural Theology, by an interdict on all philosophy.

We may allow the word *phænomena* to have any meaning it may ever have received: and it will still be true, that certain relations of phænomena manifest the

agency of human minds. That of the Supreme Mind, then, is manifested, in precisely the same manner, by the relations and harmonies of all the phænomena of the universe, among themselves, and to man's faculties of sensation and knowledge. And, since all that is known of phænomena enters into these relations, it follows that the Supreme Mind is the Creator of all that is known.

PROP. XII.—It is no valid objection to the fact of a creation, that the creation, and the Creator are incomprehensible.

1. Not that creation is incomprehensible. For the *existence* of any substance is equally so (Prop. II.): yet substances are known to exist; and the knowledge depends upon the constant combination of the various unknown powers, which belong to each. In like manner, creation is known as the combining, of the unknown diversities of possible existence, under certain conditions and limitations.

2. Nor yet that the manner of existence of the Creator is incomprehensible. For it is not more so, than that of any one of the diverse substances, of a self-existent universe. Both theism and atheism affirm the existence of the unknown. Atheism presses the known conditions and relations of things into absurdity. Theism satisfies the unavoidable demand of Reason, by admitting the One Cause of those conditions and relations.

SCHOLIUM.—The arguments of this chapter are not affected by any theory or question concerning the *principle of Causality*, on which they proceed. Whatever account may be given of the origin of this principle, in our intellectual nature; it is impossible to question its universal validity within the sphere of human knowledge, and for the cognition of existence beyond that sphere, wherever its limits may be placed. Whether we stop at the first phænomena; or go beyond them to the powers of nature, or of men; or from them, to a unity of these powers, in an unknown being; Causality is ever the principle of reason, in the recognition of phænomena, or powers, or being external to oneself.

If of phænomena,—the phænomena are known as the outward causes of sensations, and the relations among these sensations, equally with the sensations themselves, require their causes. Sometimes the causes are found in material bodies, as when several different sensations give the knowledge of one body; sometimes in the agency of mind, as when the succession of sensations in language, shows the presence of an intelligent speaker.

If of powers,—the powers are the causes of the phænomena, and the relations among the phænomena must, equally, be attributed to their causes. These causes, again, may be found either in the nature of material substances, as when several phænomena give us the knowledge of a body, as of Oxygen; or in the agency of mind, as when several distinct bodies are arranged in a manifest form of order.

If of Being,—Causality gives us no more than a cognition of it, as the unity of the powers, or their cause or source. Whether it be material or mental, depends upon the powers themselves. And whatever doctrine may be held, respecting the unity of the powers of any substance; it will, in no way, affect our conclusion, that the *relations of different substances*, and their combination in the universe, require a cause superior to the substances themselves, and that cause—Mind.

NOTE A.

THE following objection may have occurred to some readers of this work. It has been assumed possible, that the powers of any substance may rest in a unity of the substance; and we have sought no higher cause of this unity; why then of the unity of diverse substances in the world?

The answer is not difficult: If the different properties of *any substance* are manifestations of the same unity of being, under different relations; the other conditions of finite existence, if not that of diversity, will show that the substance cannot be self-existent; and the relations of *different substances* will give the same result.

If, however, the unity of powers in any body be only a unity of combination; then, precisely as we require a cause of the combination of substances in the world, our propositions will carry us to a cause of this combination of powers or properties in the same substance; whether in past time, or in the continued agency of being, may be unknown.

All the phænomena, which arise from the present agencies of nature, may be conceived to spring from the One Infinite Source of Being. But the records of past agencies and changes, discovered especially by Geology, seem to show that material substances have some independence of existence, though originated.

NOTE B.

I may also notice, in this place, one or two other objections to the present system of Theism, which have been advanced. They deserve consideration, in consequence of their aiming at another method of Theism, which I believe to fail of its purpose, to lead to fatal error, and to confuse, with the differences of theories, an inquiry on which the principles and method ought to be settled. Not that the method in question can be seen to involve any thing false in itself. It is rather one of those "demonstrations," of which

Leibnitz said "all are true if perfected;" but which do not adapt themselves to the ordinary methods of human knowledge, and consequently cannot be perfected.

The objections may be stated in the words of a Reviewer. The method followed in the present work implies, he says, that,—

"Had we been landed, not upon a diverse, but upon a single 'percept,' all else remaining the same, the causal principle would have been satisfied at the first and purely physical stage. And should the dynamics of science ever succeed in resolving separate natural forces into more comprehensive terms, till some one embraced them all, that one would fulfil all the required conditions, without having taken up any of the spiritual Attributes of God."

To this it might have been sufficient to answer, that it will be time enough to deal with this achievement of science, when it shall have been performed, or, at least, shown to be possible. Meantime, I have shown it to be impossible, and precluded by a universal condition of all our knowledge,—that of diversity. And it has been proved, that, even if it were possible, the ultimate cause of unity must be found to be Mind. He continues,—

"The only way to avoid this consequence, is to make all Causality homogeneous, and identify it with Will; to show that, in its psychological essence, Cause *means* Will; that the psychological law of Causality, therefore, *requires* Will; . . ."

On the contrary, must we not hold that the fundamental perception, from which the mind emerges with its principle of Causality, gives it two kinds of Causality, one material, one mental; in two beings, one material—the Object, the other intellectual—the Mind? And have not both equal claims to be acknowledged as really existing? The history of philosophy has demonstrated, that all philosophy, and all Theology is impossible, if we reject either of these fundamental knowledges of common sense, and universal judgment. He has, farther on,—

"All that can be *perceived* (in Nature) is Order; and it is not clear to us how any one, *who once admits the reality of secondary or physical forces*, can maintain that they may be known by this mark, —that they produce *disorder*, while mind produces *order*; so that the presence of order excludes them, and indicates mind. What

effects, other than orderly, do the so-called 'physical forces' produce? Are they not detected precisely by tracking the analogies and unravelling the tangle of phænomena? Are not their 'laws' simply our record of their method of order? If any Causations, other than mental and personal, be once admitted as real in the universe, the security of Theism, we must think, is fatally compromised."

I fear, on the contrary, that Theism is fatally compromised, when it is founded on the denial of man's universal belief in the existence of a causation which is not Will, however it may have been originated by Will.

That such must have been its origin, I have sought to prove, from the relations of diverse physical substances, forces, or causes. Not that these can be known by the mark that they produce disorder; but that, being known to exist, as the bare causes of sensations or of phænomena, they must be capable of infinite relations and arrangements; and, if found in a form of order, indicate the purpose of a Presiding Mind.

Undoubtedly, the physical forces produce no effects other than orderly: but when we have become acquainted with them, we can see that *they are such as might have produced other effects*, in an endless number of ways, so far as depended on any thing in their own nature. That all their effects are orderly, is our evidence that they are adjusted and harmonized by Mind. Their order does not depend upon any powers or properties of the distinct beings or forces, but on their relations. And the cause of the relations of two things, can never be found in the things themselves.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE IS THAT OF A BEING WHO
IS ONE, ETERNAL, INFINITE, UNCHANGEABLE.

To complete the doctrine of Theism, we have yet to establish our knowledge of the Supreme Creator as Eternal and Infinite.

It can hardly be questioned, that the cultivated human mind always has the *conception* of the Infinite Being. And experience suggests, and supports its application to a Being who really exists. Visible nature, with all its designs, seems to be unlimited in all directions. In the immense magnitudes of the telescopic, in the minute perfections of the microscopic worlds, in the inconceivable durations of geological epochs, it extends the sight beyond the imagination.

But can we advance to the knowledge of an Infinite Creator? Can we make good that man's conception of the Infinite is no mere fiction of his fancy, or of intel-

ligence reaching beyond its province, but corresponds to the truth of a really existing Being?

Experience of the world without is evidently insufficient. No observation can ever reach, no world can manifest the Infinite.

Nor can inward experience complete, what outward experience has begun. The pure Reason, apart from observation, may form mental conceptions; but these are no knowledge of Being. This truth, which the history of philosophy has illustrated, might have been foreseen from the first.

One method is possible, and one only; a method which has not yet gained the attention it deserves, but which will be found more fruitful in results, than those which have gone before it.

It is the observation of the necessary *conditions of all our knowledge* of nature,—conditions which are fulfilled, not only in the principles and action of the mind which perceives and knows, but in the outward objects of perception which are known.

The *conditions of thought* can yield no more than thought; and how can we pass from thought to being?

We have already passed from thought to being, when we affirm that the world exists, out of the mind which sees it; and that other minds exist, similar to oneself. These intuitions of sense, these knowledges of the finite, are the data of Natural Theology.

But all our knowledge of the finite is bound within

certain insuperable conditions. We shall show that these *conditions of knowledge* run into contradiction on their limits; unless we assume the existence of a Being, Eternal beyond duration, Infinite beyond extension; Unknown in His Eternal and Infinite Nature, but known as the AUTHOR OF ALL THE LIMITATIONS of the finite.

We have already employed one of these conditions of knowledge—that of diversity, to establish the truth, that One Being must be the AUTHOR OF ALL THE RELATIONS of finite beings.

Both conclusions are, in strictness, requisite to establish, that the One and Infinite is the AUTHOR OF ALL BEING of the finite.

For the basis of Theology, we may state the following four conditions of knowledge, which are evidently inseparable from the finite :—

CONDITIONS OF KNOWLEDGE.

1. All knowledge of the finite, is a knowledge of diversities.
2. Every finite being is known as existing in time, that is as enduring.
3. Every material body is known as existing in space, or as extended.
4. Every known change implies a cause, every known commencement an author¹.

¹ It is immaterial to our argument, whether things finite are spoken of as known, or as being. It is admitted that they exist in space, time, &c., whatever be their nature.

The first condition has been already considered. The second and third need no explication. The fourth is one form of stating the universal principle of all knowledge,—the principle of Causality. It is the old dogma;—*Ex nihilo nihil fit*; Out of nothing, nothing can arise; which even the atheist will not venture to call in question.

To establish the true doctrine of the Infinite, we may exhibit, under four different forms, the contradiction into which Reason falls with itself, on the hypothesis of a self-existent universe; and the solution of these contradictions by the assumption, that the universe is limited in diversity, in time, in space, in causal dependence, by a Being who Himself is ONE, ETERNAL, INFINITE, UNCHANGEABLE.

FIRST ANTINOMY.

A self-existent Universe can neither be finite nor infinite in its diversities.

THESIS.—It cannot be finite; since there can be no cause of its limitation to any definite number of diversities, or of multiplicities, rather than to any other.

ANTITHESIS.—It cannot be infinite; because an infinite number is impossible and absurd (as in Prop. III.).

SOLUTION.—The Universe is finite; and One Being, not conditioned in diversity, is the Author of the limitations of its diversities.

This solution takes away the absurdity of the Thesis. The Author of the limitations must be One, and with-

out diversity, otherwise the contradiction remains unsolved.

COROL.—The One Cause of limitations is unknown, because out of the conditions of knowledge. He becomes known in His Agency, and is known as Mind (Prop. IX.). But every human mind, and every material body, are equally unknown in the unity of their powers.

SECOND ANTINOMY.

A self-existent universe can neither have had commencement, nor have existed eternally without commencement.

THESIS.—It cannot have had commencement: for if it had, it must have arisen into being of itself, without cause. Among all the absurdities which are held for truth, this hypothesis can hardly obtain a place.

ANTITHESIS.—It cannot have existed without commencement: for if it had, it must have existed an infinite time. No assignable period, however great, can measure its past duration; for if it could, then, at the commencement of that period, the universe must have commenced to exist, and we fall into the absurdity of the Thesis. It must therefore have existed during a time beyond every assignable period, that is, an infinite time.

But an infinite time is impossible and absurd, and not merely incogitable or inconceivable. This is evident, if we look to time future. It can never be limited, yet can never reach infinity. The same is true of time past.

It cannot be limited, for whatever period we may imagine to have elapsed previously to the present moment, still time must have preceded. Nor can it be infinite, since no succession can reach infinity.

Infinite time is not merely what the human faculties cannot conceive : it is what these faculties may see to be as manifestly impossible as infinite number. Time is as much a succession as number, differing only in its perfect continuity.

Indeed the truth should be self-evident, as soon as stated, that an infinite time is an absurdity. It would be unnecessary to delay upon what is so plain, but that men of note have missed the truth on this question, and have given currency to serious errors.

Thus the hypothesis of a self-existent universe, runs into contradiction on the condition of time, which adheres to all knowledge.

SOLUTION.—The Universe had a commencement; and was originated by a Being, Infinite beyond all condition of time.

This solution takes away the absurdity of self-creation from the Thesis. The Creator must be Infinite, beyond all duration ; for if less than Infinite, however indefinite in duration, He is One being of a universe in time, and the contradiction is not solved.

He is thus the Cause of the limitation of the universe in time.

COROL. 1.—It is not difficult to show, that He must be Superior to time itself, as its Author. For the con-

tradition belongs to time itself, if it be any thing real. And if not real, but only a relation of events, and a form of man's intuition, He is the Author of time, as the Creator of the universe and of man. It is easy to see, that the arguments of these antinomies will hold good, however unknown the finite may be, provided only it be known as finite.

COROL. 2.—Since the earliest ages of speculation, the atheist has never ceased to assault Theology with the question—What was the Agency of the Deity, before He made the world, and why did He not create it sooner? Theology has a conclusive answer:—All question respecting the Procedure of the Deity out of time, is irrational from beings who exist in time, and whose knowledge is inseparable from the condition of time.

But the question of the atheist may be retorted upon himself. The universe, he says, is self-existent, and has existed without beginning. But, like himself, it exists in time, and therefore he should be able to give some account of the conditions of its procedure. How does it happen then that, after its infinity of duration, so many of its inhabitants, in this world at least, cling so pertinaciously to, what you designate an ignorant prejudice, the belief in a Supreme and Infinite Creator?

It may be answered, perhaps, that things recur infinitely in circles. But what then has determined the magnitude of the circles, and why are we at this particular point, rather than at any other?

THIRD ANTINOMY.

A self-existent universe can neither be limited in space, nor without limitation.

THESIS.—It cannot be limited: for we have no cause of its limitation, nor of its existence in any particular part of space, rather than in any other. Space extends indefinitely beyond the limits of the universe; and there can be no cause for the fulness of one part of space, and the emptiness of another.

ANTITHESIS.—It cannot be without limitation, for then it must be, not only unlimited, but infinite. It is true that *space* itself, like *time*, or *number*, may be *unlimited, yet not infinite*. But what has real existence, as *the Universe*, must be an absolute whole, whether within limits, or beyond all limits.

But an infinite present whole is as impossible, as an infinite past duration. Matter is known, and can be known, only as extended: to suppose it infinite, is to suppose it beyond all extension; that is, it is to suppose ourselves having a partial knowledge of a whole, which cannot be made up of parts.

Hence the universe cannot be unlimited. And we have shown that it cannot be limited. Consequently the hypothesis of a self-existent universe, presses into a contradictory, the condition of our knowledge of things existing in space.

SOLUTION.—The universe is limited in space; and its limitation is imposed upon it by a Being,

whose Existence is beyond the conditions of known space or extension.

As before, the Agency, manifested under conditions of space, is that of a Being infinitely beyond them.

FOURTH ANTINOMY.

A self-existent universe of change, can neither have had commencement of its series of changes, nor have changed eternally without commencement.

THESIS.—The series of changes cannot have commenced from nothing, since every commencement of being must have had a cause or author. (Condition 4.) Nor yet from that which had existed eternally without change, though subject to it,—subject to be conditioned by causes, yet unconditioned. For it must always have continued without change. Change can no more commence without cause, than existence.

ANTITHESIS.—It cannot have changed eternally. For then, at every point of the succession, an infinite number of changes must already have succeeded one another; which is absurd.

SOLUTION.—The universe of change has been originated by a Being, eternally Unchangeable, and Unconditioned by superior causes.

This solution, like the former, takes away the contradiction, by postulating the existence of a Being, whose nature is unknown; but who is discovered to us, as the

author of all conditions of the known. It avoids absurdity, by declining to include all existence within the conditions of the finite. It removes contradiction from the sphere of knowledge, by the cognition of a Being who passeth knowledge.

SCHOLIUM I.—It is thus established, that we can have no knowledge of that Being, as One, as Eternal, as Infinite, as Unchangeable; but only the cognition of His Existence;—a cognition which we gain, by observing the insufficiency of the known finite, without the Infinite and Unknown.

But, be it observed, this knowledge of the finite, which does not apply to the Infinite, is no knowledge of the finite in its *being* or *nature*, but only in its *limitations*. Of the being of the finite, apart from the manifestations of its agency, we have no more knowledge than of the Being of the Infinite (Prop. II.—IV.).

And, *considered with reference to being*, or to the powers of being, is it not as properly a negative knowledge that there are limitations, as that there are no limitations? In the one case, beings exist which are not infinite, but how limited is beyond knowledge. In the other, a Being exists who is not finite, but how infinite is beyond knowledge.

At all events it is manifest, that to affirm the Existence of the Infinite Being uncertain, because His Nature is unknown, is pure nonsense. For we never think of doubting the existence of finite beings, whose nature must ever be unknown.

Thus it is always in vain, that atheism seeks refuge from absurdity in the unknown. For the arguments of Theism hold good of the unknown, so long as it is finite and diverse.

But that Being, who is known to exist as Infinite and Eternal, is known, in the same pulsation of thought, as the Source or *First Cause* of all the causes of the universe. He is the Author of the unity of diversities, the source of all the powers by which existence can be manifested to the mind, the imposer of the limitations of finite things.

He is thus known, not only as the Supreme Intelligence, ordering the universe, but as its Creator.

In the language of the metaphysicians, He is the *Infinite* in Being, the *Absolute* in Agency, or rather the *Absolute First Cause*.

For finite beings, in the common apprehension of them, which may be the true one, are absolute in their existence; that is, they have *present* existence in themselves, independently of any continued agency of other beings. The Infinite should therefore be said to be Absolute First Cause (2d Antinomy).

He is Infinite in Himself, Absolute Cause to the world; Infinite in Himself, Absolute in His Agency. But how the Infinite becomes Absolute Cause,—in other words, the relation between the Divine Being and the Divine Agency, is manifestly unknown and incomprehensible.

But, here again, that something is Unknown, need

not discredit what is known. The Agency and the Being of God are demonstrable, though the nature of either be inconceivable. The agency of finite beings is equally inconceivable, in its foundation, and in its relation to their existence; as the Free-will controversy abundantly shows. And yet the fact of their agency, or of their existence, is not questioned.

It must be observed, however, that we have found no reason whatever, for regarding the Divine Agency as, in any way, necessitated by the Nature of the Divine Being.

Reason carries us to that Agency for a First Cause, and excludes from that Cause all conditions of the finite; but there its sphere ends. The Absolute is not necessitated, because absolute. He imposes the conditions and limitations of the knowable, but is not subject to conditions or limitations in Himself.

SCHOLIUM II.—The argument is evidently the same, in the case of each of the antinomies. Number, space, time past or future, may be conceived as indefinitely extended; but can be neither limited nor infinite. But every existing being must be an absolute whole, and therefore either finite or infinite. The world cannot be infinite, because time, space, or number must then be infinite. But it may be finite, provided it have a Cause of its Being, beyond all conditions of the finite.

This is the true philosophy of the subject. But it may be held by some, that a universe infinite in time, space, or numerical diversity, though inconceivable is

not really impossible; and that human thought, in its inability to comprehend the infinite, is obliged to form the conception of being, like that of time or space, as *indefinite*. It is therefore necessary to consider the effect of this theory on the doctrine of Theism.

Let us take the case of time. Suppose an infinite time may have elapsed. Then the Universe of order must either have had commencement in the unlimited time, or have existed infinitely without commencement. If it have existed infinitely, (and can be known to have existed *indefinitely*,) without commencement, still, it must always have been ruled by the Supreme Intelligence (Chap. III). We thus come to the opinion of a universe eternally subject to the Supreme Mind.

If it commenced, whether from nothing, or from a state of disorder, we must then have a First Cause of its commencement, and of its limitation in time; Who must therefore exist infinitely, beyond all limitation. Time, as duration, may, on this hypothesis, be regarded as an imperfect conception of the Divine Attribute of Eternity.

The other conditions may be similarly dealt with.

CONCLUSION.—We are now in a position to answer the questions, which remained unresolved at the end of Chapter II. Some of them, it is evident, are beyond our reach; but we have established, that the Supreme Mind is the Creator of the universe; that He is not confined to any powers of finite things, however unknown; that His Agency had commencement, with

reference to the present universe; but that its continuance, *as the Source of the continued existence* of created beings, cannot be demonstrated. But we have seen that His Being is Eternal, Infinite, Unchangeable; and may hence infer, with probability, that His works are not only ordered with marvellous Wisdom, to run through ages of material change, but are, in some way, constantly dependent upon His Power; or, at least, are subject to an Agency, which may have its epochs of change, as well as its epoch of commencement².

To complete the doctrine of Theism, it remains to search, by special observation of created beings, whether the Mind manifested in nature, is, in any other respects, similar to that of man. The conclusions from this part of the subject, will be briefly indicated in Chapter VI.

² I have shown, elsewhere, that the doctrine of Divine Providence is not compromised by any opinion upon this question. For that of the Divine Presence, we must look from Nature to Revelation.

NOTE C.

It will be seen by those who are familiar with the works of Sir Wm. Hamilton, that the doctrine of the Infinite, maintained in the preceding Chapter, is not coincident with any one of the four which he has stated as possible¹. The first, which is his own, is not inconsistent with the foregoing, but confines itself to a negation of all knowledge of the Infinite, and does not enunciate, what I have made the most prominent part of the doctrine, that, notwithstanding our ignorance of His Nature, we have certain knowledge that He exists; and that this knowledge is, in no way, disparaged by our ignorance; since, it is admitted, we are equally ignorant of the finite.

That our result agrees with the doctrine which Sir William holds, on the basis of *belief*, is evident from the following, among many passages of his works:—

“We are thus taught the salutary lesson, that the capacity of thought is not to be constituted into the measure of existence; and are warned from recognising the domain of our knowledge as necessarily co-extensive with the horizon of our faith. And by a wonderful revelation, we are thus, in the very consciousness of our inability to conceive aught above the relative and finite, inspired with a belief in the existence of something unconditioned beyond the sphere of all reprehensible (comprehensible?) reality².”

The difference between Sir William's doctrine and that of these pages, will be farther evident from his account of the antinomy:—

“The Conditioned is the mean between two extremes,—two inconditionates, exclusive of each other, *neither of which can be conceived as possible*, but of which, on the principles of contradiction and excluded middle, *one must be admitted as necessary*. On this opinion, therefore, our faculties are shown to be weak, but not deceitful³.”

¹ Discussions, p. 12, 2nd Edition.

² Ibid. p. 15.

³ Ibid.

According to this view, the two contradictories are equally inconceivable, and our faculties are quite incompetent to decide which of the two may be possible. I hold the truth to be, that *both are impossible* without the admission, that the Infinite exists beyond conditions of the finite; and that, with this admission, it can be seen that one only of the contradictories is possible.

Kant's doctrine of the Infinite has had great influence on modern philosophy. His celebrated "Critique of the Pure Reason" examines the Contradictions or Antinomies, with a view to exhibit the impotency of human reason, but neither applies them to establish our *cognition* of the Infinite, nor even makes them a basis of belief,—unless it be on the principle that, where we can know nothing, we may believe any thing. And then, to complete the mischief, the work concludes with sections on the impossibility of this, that, and the other demonstration of the Being of God. If this system be true, Natural Theology cannot stand the tests of Reason: it must descend from the rank of a science, to that of popular belief.

But the error of Kant became apparent, when Fichte carried out his principles to an Idealism, which denies the existence of the world. The intellectual system, which had failed of the Infinite, was found to fail also of the finite. The two knowledges fell together, and were thus seen to *rest on the same principles*.

The present investigation assumes the knowledge of the finite, as all men do, and shows the knowledge of the Infinite to be similar in character, and to *rest on the same principles*. Its truth is confirmed by the errors of Kant and Fichte. The latter should have stated his system as the reduction to absurdity of that of Kant.

It remains to examine our doctrine, by the light of Sir William Hamilton's criticism on former theories. But the following questions must be left to the reader's consideration:—

1. Whether this doctrine of the Infinite do not effect, what, he says, former writers had not attempted, in establishing *the third* of his four alternatives⁴; and showing that *THE ONE includes*

⁴ Ibid. p. 29.

both the Unconditioned Infinite, and the Unconditioned Absolute ;—the Infinite, in the Nature ; the Absolute, in the Agency of God.

2. Whether it be not freed from the charge of "subverting the highest principle of intelligence, which asserts, that of two contradictories, both cannot, but one must, be true⁵;" by its distinction, so natural to common sense, between the Divine Existence and the Divine Agency, and its placing their *relation* (some such word must be employed, every word is inadequate) above the principles of our intelligence.

3. Whether it do not combine the Infinite and Absolute in something more than "a unity *relative to us*, (combined) by the *negative* bond of their inconceivability⁶;" viz., in a Unity of the Divine Nature above all relation to us, but manifested as real, by the contradictions which result from its denial.

The doctrine which it has been attempted to establish, gives no countenance to the notion of necessity ruling the Deity.

And, though a philosophy of the Unconditioned, it is as much "a discipline of humility⁷," as Sir William's philosophy of the Conditioned. It not only admits, but proves, that the secret things of God cannot but be, to man, "past finding out."

Yet it affords a basis for dogmatic Theology, by showing, that the Infinite Deity may as certainly be known to exist, though we know not how ; as finite man, or material substance, may be known to exist, though we know not how : and that, though Unknown in His Infinite Being, He is known in the manifestations of His Agency in the world ; just as man, though unknown in his finite personality, is known by his agency in the world.

And are not these results of our philosophy entirely in accordance with the common beliefs of men ? Is it not the feeling of many an uneducated, but thoughtful, Christian, that God certainly exists, though Incomprehensible ; and that His Eternity, though Incomprehensible, is not an Eternity of duration ; and that, though Unknown in His Infinite Nature, He is known in the works of His Power ?

⁵ Ibid. p. 30.

⁶ Ibid. p. 31.

⁷ Ibid. p. 625.

CHAPTER V.

COMPARISON OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES OF THE MIND, IN THE ATTAINMENT OF ITS THEOLOGICAL AND ITS OTHER KNOWLEDGES.

WE have already made some advance in our method of verifying our knowledge of God, by comparing its character and its processes, with those of the knowledges which are allowed to be fundamental.

The same method may be carried farther; and its results may conveniently be exhibited in a series of parallels.

1. The existence of other minds beyond our own, of which alone we have immediate consciousness, is made known to us through their agency, voluntary or involuntary, in the *material world*. This world, or more strictly its phenomena, always appears to lie between our own minds, and any other with which we may be acquainted.

Thus the existence of minds, no less than of matter itself, becomes known to us through sensation. The

sound of a voice, the expression of a face, are sensible objects which discover mind.

But we have found the manifestations of the Supreme Intelligence in the material world. Not that they are confined to it, for they extend through the mental and moral constitution of man.

That is, *Material phænomena manifest to us the existence of human minds, and of the Presiding Mind of the universe.*

This is our first parallel between our Theological and our common knowledges.

2. We have seen (Chaps. II. and III.) that the Agency of the Supreme Mind is ^{Which indicate Purpose.} manifested by certain *adjustments, arrangements, adaptations* of things, which indicate intelligent purpose.

But the actions, the language, the writings of a man, —whatever phænomena manifest the agency of a human mind, are, like the former, adjustments or arrangements of material substances, combined in such a manner as to indicate intelligent purpose. His actions are seen in his works, or in his movements; his language is the combination of certain sounds, which are movements of the air; his writings are certain combinations of visible marks, each of which was, at first, arbitrarily chosen, for the expression of an elementary sound to the eye. All these adjustments and arrangements of things, show the meaning and purpose of the mind.

Hence, *No single phænomenon, but certain combinations*

of phænomena, discover the Existence and Character of the Supreme Mind, and of the minds of men.

This is the second parallel.

3. We have already observed, that it is in
By induction. his self-consciousness, that man gains his knowledge of mind, as different from any material substance. Without self-knowledge, all other minds would remain unknown, and all manifestations of mind unperceived.

But when the knowledge of mind has thus been gained in oneself, the agency of any other mind, and that of the Supreme Mind, manifested by similar marks of order and combination, whether in the works and words of a man, or in the phænomena of nature, are recognised on the same principle of Reason,—that of *Causality*; which compels us to assign every effect to its adequate cause. We see, in both cases, that intention is the only adequate cause of a certain combination of things.

The knowledge we have of the existence or character of any cause from manifest effects, must be classed under *inductive knowledge*. Thus the law of universal gravitation is known to be true, by its accounting for all the movements of the Solar System. The knowledge of the effects from the cause is *deductive*; as when, from a given attraction, we calculate the movement it will generate.

Hence the mind may be said to have inductive knowledge of every intelligent being beyond itself.

This is the third parallel.

4. The knowledge of Mind is always a Known in its knowledge of *powers* or *faculties*, in certain powers. relations. Man knows himself in the faculties of *sensibility*, *affections*, *will*, *reason*; sensibility to the impressions of the material world; affections or feelings of relation to other minds; will, or the self-activity which is brought into action in every movement, and every perception; reason, the supreme governor of the other faculties, as well as the interpreter of outward phænomena; the author of unity in diversities, as in joining many words in a unity of meaning; the percipient of unity, in diversities external to it.

Man's knowledge of other minds is *similar in character*, then, to that of himself, though gained in a different manner. It is a knowledge of their powers, in certain relationships.

And we have seen, thus far, that the Supreme Mind is known as Power guided by Intelligence, or acting with purpose, and creating unity in diversities.

The two mental faculties of *Will* and *Reason* are, therefore, known as Attributes of God. Power becomes Will, when it is guided by reason.

Further observation shows, that nature contains also a revelation of Divine Affections, as that God is *Holy* and *Beneficent*. But the *sensibility* may easily be seen to be a faculty adapted to the conditions of finite knowledge.

Hence our knowledge of the Deity, as of men, is a knowledge of powers, in their relations to the world.

This is the fourth parallel.

Knowledge
of the
material.

5. But *material* substances, also, as well as mind, are known in their *relational properties* or *powers*. Matter becomes known, in the first instance, through its action upon the organs of sensation. It is perceived as in reaction with the mind, in every act, and in every sensation. The mind thus appears to stand face to face with it, and views it as extended, hard, coloured, &c.

Hence the first and popular notion of matter, that it is known in certain sensible qualities, rather than in powers. But even if we rest in this notion, and inquire no farther into its nature; we easily see that these qualities become known to us, through certain dynamical actions of the nervous system, which are excited by outward causes. These outward causes may sometimes be known to be in dynamical action, previously to their impression on the organs of sense, as in the cases of light and sound.

But a little attention shows, that all the sensible properties of matter are no more than phenomena; or relations and manifestations of powers, partly known, partly unknown, which lie beyond them.

We have noticed before, that certain material elements, as Oxygen, are known only in their relations to other substances, and have no immediate effect on sensation.

It is no less true of visible and tangible substances, that the immediate phenomena are relational. They

depend on relations to the senses, and also on relations external to the senses. Hardness, roughness, elasticity, depend on the arrangements of particles, and the molecular forces; weight, on the force of attraction; extension, on the multiplication of parts.

The material substance of physical science is not, in fact, the hard, extended body of sensation; but a system of beings, unknown in themselves, but known in their mechanical, chymical, and other relational properties or powers. These, and not the qualities of immediate perception, are the ultimates of our knowledge of matter; as reason, and all the faculties, are the ultimates of our knowledge of mind.

Hence, *Matter, as well as mind, is known as a system of properties or powers of relation*¹.

This is our fifth parallel between our Theological and common knowledges.

¹ It will complete this part of the subject, and is not altogether irrelevant to our purpose, to observe in what particulars Mind and matter, considered as *objects*, are essentially *distinct* in knowledge. The distinction rests—

1. On the totally different character of their powers. We may trace some parallel between attraction and will, between chymical affinities and human affections; but their difference is obvious, and an essential distinction between the two classes of finite beings. The distinction is carried farther in the supreme mental faculty of reason, which governs the will, and may influence or change the affections; whereas the affinities and attractions of material substances are unchangeable.

2. Mind is known as one in all its faculties, matter never as one, but as a multiplication of similar parts.

3. The various kinds of matter are capable of composition,—a notion inapplicable to mind.

6. From this it follows, that material substances, as well as minds, are manifested to us in the world of phænomena, but lie beyond it.

As remote
as that
of Minds.

Matter is known in its powers, and each of these, through its effects or manifestations. The world of phænomena is not itself the material world: sound is not, colour is not, hardness is not, extension is not; all the sensible qualities together are not.

If these qualities were the powers of material substances, as reason, feeling, are powers of mind; we should then stand in *closer relation* to the physical, than to the intelligent world. Matter would be nearer to our cognition-faculty, than the minds of men. We might say, that we have the same immediate perception of the *relations* of material substances, which we have of those substances themselves: and so Mind, the cause of their relations, would never be reached without a step *beyond the material world*.

And this, perhaps, is the popular view of the subject. But it is one which it behoves philosophy to correct, no less than the appearance of the heavens revolving daily round the earth.

It is not a harmless error, for it supports the frequent misconception, that the knowledge of matter has a certainty and immediateness, which that of the Deity has not. It is not always seen that our knowledge of men must, in that case, be similarly remote.

That the *visible* world is not the real material world, but a phænomenon, or phænomena of it, will generally

be admitted. The world is there in the dark, as in the light. But is it not equally obvious, that the tangible is no more the real material world, than the visible; but another phænomenon of it? Not only does it depend upon the properties of our sensibility, but on the powers of material substances, and the relations of their parts.

All phænomena, all sensible appearances depend upon these relations among things, and their relations to our sensibility. But the outward causes of the phænomena, or the outward powers, act, *through* the appearances, upon our organs; and are felt, in immediate antagonism with our own powers. We have thus immediate perception of the action of material substances upon our sensibility.

But we have a perception, equally immediate, of the action of minds. As the powers of matter act through the sensible phænomena, and assure us of an external reality; so the reason of a designer reaches us through his evident plans, that of a speaker, through his words.

Thus as mind becomes known to mind through certain manifestations of relation, which indicate adjustment, plan, design; so every material substance becomes known, in a similar manner, through certain other manifestations of relation, in the same phænomenal world. And the very same phænomena, which, when viewed by themselves, discover the powers of material substances, may discover, in their connexion with the universal system, the Purpose of the All-disposing Mind.

The Supreme Mind then, like the minds of men, and

like material substances themselves, is manifested to us in the world of appearance, but lies beyond it.

This is our sixth parallel.

7. That the visible, tangible, world of common perception, is not the real world of material powers; but a world of imagery, conjured into existence by the relations of powers, mental and material; is no high-flown, uncertain, metaphysical fancy, but a demonstrated truth of physical science. Every object in that world is as much an image, as the visible image of the telescope or microscope. The substance of physical science, with its powers and affinities, lies behind the image; which is presented to the mind, like an optical image, in that position in space, from which the several causes of sensation appear to diverge.

This manifest truth is often passed by, as affording a basis for *Idealism*. But it does not, in the least, discredit our knowledge of the external, material, world. The world really exists, apart from the mind; though colour, hardness, extension, be not the essential powers of its existence, but only their relations among themselves, or to the mind. To this extent the position of Idealism is unassailable. It falls into error when it fails to perceive, that, besides the inward, there are *outward causes* of the phenomena; which act *through* the phenomena upon our sensation-faculties, and without which, these faculties could never be affected, nor the mind awakened to its intellectual life.

The image of perception is not a mere mental image, but a phenomenon in space; sometimes a tangible phenomenon; sometimes visible, as a cloud, though intangible; sometimes, as Oxygen, neither visible nor tangible, but discovered in its relations to other material substances.

8. Our method commences with the assumption that matter exists. We here learn the principle of Reason, on which we know it to exist. As the being of self is recognised in the action of the powers known in self-consciousness, so the being of matter is recognised in the action of powers or forces from without. Sensation is excited by the outward causes, acting dynamically upon the nerves. Phenomena arise, in the meeting of these causes with the powers of self. We have thus immediate perception of the effects of certain powers acting from without; and Reason is guided by nature, to assign these effects to the action of really existing beings, which are thus recognised as causes.

Induction
of material
causes.

And not only the *existence* of external beings, their *nature*, also, is known on the same principle of Reason. Whether they be the powers of intelligent beings, or of physical substances, we always know them, on the same principle, as the external causes of phenomena. It is not till after inward observation of the character of our own powers, that we can tell, and then only by induction of cause from effect, that the external power is, or is not, similar in character to our own.

And it is important to notice, that our knowledge of mind is always *more intimate* than that of material bodies. We see other minds, by the aid of the light we have received in our own. Material phænomena discover the existence of certain powers, of which we know the nature in self-consciousness. Other phænomena discover the existence of material powers, but these are known through the phænomena only; and their *differences* by comparison of phænomena, not in any inward or immediate consciousness. They are known, in their effects, to be different from the powers of mind, and to be different in different kinds of substances.

If then we see through a glass darkly, in our knowledge of mind; much more so, in that of matter.

Thus our *knowledge of God, as of other men, is more intimate than that of matter; but the latter, like the others, is gained by induction of causes from effects.*

This is the seventh parallel.

9. Each of these knowledges is *a union of*
And of
their unity. several distinct *perceptions*. This is the universal character of all knowledge. Various powers, shown in various relations, belong to each material substance. Several distinct perceptions, gained by different senses,—as colour, visible extension and shape, by one sense; hardness, tangible extension and shape, by another,—are combined in one phænomenon-object in space. The several phænomena appear conjoined in one image in space; and Reason combines, in the know-

ledge of one object, the outward causes of the connected phænomena.

Thus, as the existence of each power is known, by causality, from its manifestations; so the connexion of the powers in one object in space, is known from the conjoined manifestations.

The same truth holds good of those powers of a substance, which are discovered in its relations to other substances.

The Mind, in like manner, knows itself as a unity of several powers; not, however, as a unity in space, but as a unity of self-consciousness. Other minds are known as similar to itself, though through different means. Their unity becomes apparent, in the unity of plan or meaning in their acts or words. Thus the same language shows, at once, the thought and the feelings and disposition of the speaker. The same course of conduct shows, at once, the purpose and the character of the agent².

² Matter is not known, like Mind, in the unity of its powers, but only in its *phenomenal unity*. This is evident from its divisibility. However indefinitely divided, the unity of properties is unchanged. Nor can they be thought inseparably inherent in any ultimate molecules or atoms. For such atoms, even if they can be conceived *infinitely* hard, and indivisible, are still extended, and therefore consist of extended parts. And since each atom is, by hypothesis, a unity of the powers of matter, its parts are parts of that unity. That is, the atom is something different in the whole and in its parts. It is therefore both a unity and a diversity; and all ultimate atoms, even of simple substances, are compounded: which is absurd. Hence it follows that matter is indefinitely divisible, that the unity of its powers in extension is only phenomenal, and that the real unity is unknown.

The Supreme Mind is similarly known, as a Unity of different Attributes. The unity of plan in the works of nature discovers the Agency of Intelligence, but contains also a revelation of the Character of the Creator, and of His Holy and Beneficent Purpose in the creation. And the Divine Agency is perceived, not only through the different senses, but in self-consciousness; which comprehends the divinely constructed world of man's intellectual and moral constitution.

The knowledge of the Deity in His Attributes, is amplified by that of His Infinite Nature. Human minds are limited in their sphere of life and action. The Divine Mind cannot be comprehended within limits of space or time; but must have originated all the relations, and all the limitations of things.

Hence the knowledge of God, like that of a man, and of any material substance, is a unity of several distinct elements, which are perceived through different channels of knowledge.

This is the eighth parallel.

10. All knowledge of existence, whether
 Permanence of Matter. of oneself or other beings, is a knowledge of powers and a knowledge of unities. Mind is known in its powers, and in the unity of its powers. Matter is known in the *differences* of its powers; but only in its phænomenal unity; which is referred, however, by cognition, to an unknown unity of powers. But of the real unity of any ma-

terial substance, we have no knowledge, and can form no conception.

Nature gives us a conviction of the *permanence* of matter, but not of the permanence of any particular substance. To whatever divisions, or mechanical, or chymical changes, any substance may be subjected, we are always sure that no particle of matter can be lost. The principle of causality, in discovering to us only the relational powers of substances, assures us that these powers produce change, but *can never be competent to annihilate*. The powers of substances are changed in chymical combination, and the unities of the constituents are lost in the compound.

11. But our knowledge of mind goes somewhat farther than that of matter. The Personality. unity and permanence of self-consciousness, known intimately in self; and in others, by induction from observed phenomena; constitute what is called *Personality*. We have a natural conviction of a personality, which began its being before any observed action of the powers, and remains the same, under all the various actions or suspensions of the faculties, and under all changes of character. But we can never define with precision, wherein this personality consists.

Similarly, and for similar reasons, the Attributes of the Supreme Mind, manifested in their unity in the world (8th parallel), are known as those of One Personal Being.

And as we know ourselves as personal beings, though

it is impossible to define exactly, wherein our personality consists; so the Supreme Being, who is known in the works of His Power, must be regarded as a Personal Being; though our knowledge of His Personality can have no scientific exactness.

The points of difference and agreement, between our knowledges of the Divine and human personalities, as Infinite and finite, have already been adverted to (Antinomy 4, Schol. I.). That of man we believe to have had commencement, and we must therefore believe it not impossible, in the nature of things, that its existence might cease. We can have no exact proof of its permanence. That of God is known as Eternal, beyond all time. That of man is limited in the sphere of its agency in space: that of God is Infinite, beyond all extension.

And as we can form no conception of the Divine Personality, as Infinite; so the human personality, though it can be conceived as finite, becomes equally unknown and inconceivable, when we consider the manner of its limitation in being, and its relation and dependence on the Infinite.

In like manner, the finite is no less inexplicable than the Infinite, in the commencement of his agency, and in the relation of his agency to his nature. The question of Free-will, though under no uncertainty of practical moment, cannot be exactly decided on speculative grounds. That of Divine Freedom is thus far decided, that there can be no Necessity Superior to the

Infinite and Eternal One. But the origin of His Agency is unsearchable as His Being.

Hence our knowledge of the human is equally partial and inexact, and under similar restrictions, with that of the Divine Personality.

It is important to observe, that our Theological knowledge is subject to no peculiarity in this respect. And this is our ninth parallel.

12. In these nine parallels, we have seen that our knowledges of God, of men, of the ^{Spontaneous} knowledges. world, have several points of resemblance to one another in their limits, their character, and the mode of their attainment. It was proposed to show, that they are all given us in similar spontaneous processes of thought, under the teaching of nature.

To complete this undertaking, we must offer some further observations, on the origin of all knowledge.

It will be admitted that man's most common and unquestionable knowledges are not born with him. He comes into the world with no innate knowledge of other beings, no innate self-consciousness of his own being; but provided with certain faculties of knowledge, or rather, perhaps, capacities capable of being awakened to the condition of active faculties, by means of their first communication with the sensible world.

It is no less unquestionable, that, when men begin to reflect and to direct their thoughts, they find themselves already in possession of certain knowledges; which they afterwards receive as intuitive, and rarely question.

They have gained them, it is evident, without seeking them, and without knowing to what their minds were directed. Knowledge must have been acquired under the guidance of nature, and by the spontaneous action of the faculties.

How acquired. 13. It must then have been acquired, in the course of the mind's communication with the world.

But though this first learning is spontaneous and unperceived; yet having gained it, we are able, not indeed by memory, but by observation of the constant faculties and mental actions, to look back and trace, to a certain extent, the course in which it has arisen.

Let us consider the case of the fully developed mind; which regards an object, in its properties or powers, and knows it to be distinct and separate from itself. How can it have gained this knowledge?

Clearly by means of those powers and faculties, which it knows itself to have possessed since the commencement of its intellectual life; and through the action of the object upon those faculties.

14. But the action of the object ends with its impressions upon the sensibility. These alone cannot give the knowledge of an external being. If the mind were mere sensibility, the only result would be a sensational feeling, without perception of the object at all.

And even of the sensations, we have seen, the causes are to be sought, not wholly in the object, but still more

in the peculiar properties of the nerves, as well as in the mental sensibility to their affections. The nerve of sight can give the sensation only of light; if struck, or pressed, or pricked, it gives a sensation similar to sparks of fire. And it is insensible to the touch. The nerve of hearing is sensitive only to the impression of sound; and receives this impression, when it is affected by pressure, or by internal disease.

So that the external object is only in part the cause, even of the sensation. Yet, since the properties of the nerves, and the mental sensibility, are the same in all the varying sensations; we are accustomed to consider the outward objects, as the causes of such or such affections of sensibility.

But a sensation, or any number of sensations, is not the knowledge of an object; much less of an object as distinct from self. And the known object can go no farther, than to occasion sensations related to one another under certain conditions of space.

15. Whence then the knowledge of the object? If not from itself, it must be the ^{Action of the Mind.} mind which constructs it from the given materials, by applying its own faculties to their interpretation.

Of these, the spontaneous affections are not called into action in perception. The sensibility is the only faculty entering into it, which can be classed with the feelings.

The other faculties are the Reason and the Will. The

reason must be understood in the widest sense, as including Intelligence and Understanding. The will is that self-activity, of which every man may be conscious if he please, whether it be an absolute originating power or not.

Now it is evident, that neither of these faculties alone can gain, from the impressions of sensation, the knowledge of an object distinct from the self.

That the will alone cannot is manifest. But neither can the reason alone, without the will. It must be an act of will, to fix the attention first on the object or on the self, and then to transfer it to the other. And, in short, it is self-evident that in every perception, and in every action, the two elements, self and object, are brought into a relation of action and reaction ; and that either of them becomes the more prominent in consciousness, as the attention is more intensely fixed upon it.

When any one of the sensations is excited, as that of touch by pressure, the mind may be no more than sensitive. It may notice the feeling alone, as it generally does when it is painful, and may have no perception.

Or it may direct attention to the outward cause of the pressure. The mere sensation is less noticed than before, but the reason now gains perception of an outward object. It may also direct attention to a force impressed by itself, upon the surface which is touched. It thus gains perception of itself as cause. So, of sight, or of any other sensation, it may be seen that the sen-

sible phenomenon is always produced by the meeting of a power of the self, with a power external to the self.

This perception of self and object in mutual relation, is the ultimate point, in the course of the attainment of knowledge, that the mind can reach in reflection. When knowledge has commenced, we may trace the prior causes of this relation, lying within or without us; but at this point it commenced, in the opening mind; and from this point, the full-grown mind takes its departure, in every addition to what it knows. At this point then, we find that our knowledge rests on the principle of Causality, in virtue of which we recognise the self and the world as distinct.

16. This principle, so much discussed, never questioned in practical life, and, when rightly understood, beyond all subtleties of speculation,—this principle, variously expressed,—every thing that begins has its cause; nothing can arise out of nothing,—is thus found to be the latent principle of the mind's judgment, at that point of its intellectual life, at which its knowledge commences.

Its spontaneous principle.

Human knowledge is, in fact, the product of natural causation. Physical causes awaken the faculties to action; and then act upon the awakened faculties, which themselves become new powers or causes, to transform the physical impressions into the elements of knowledge. Causation is the parent of knowledge; and the intelligence, looking back upon its processes, cannot go beyond

the conditions of its own life. Original, uncaused, absolute Being exists, but is beyond the sphere of man. He may have cognition of it as cause, but cannot know it as absolute. That which is originated under conditions, can never embrace the Unconditioned.

Causality then is the principle of reason in all its use ; and has repeated application in those latent processes, which give the mind its first perceptions of things, and lie at the foundation of all subsequent perceptions.

The reason interprets the first sensation, into a perception of an outward cause ; and recognises the difference of causes in that succession of various sensations, which had first awakened the attention ; and combines the simple perceptions in one perception of an object. It does all this spontaneously and unconsciously ; and, having attained the fulness of its development, it verifies the primary knowledges it has gained, by the same principle of causality.

This principle has been employed, and its application justified, in several of the arguments by which we have endeavoured to establish, or rather to verify, our knowledge of God. We now find that it is not only applied by the full-grown mind, in all its reasoning, but is the latent principle of those first processes of thought, by which the mind gained its original knowledge of itself, and of the world external to it.

The principle of reason in the verification of our Theological and other knowledges, is also the principle of reason,

in those spontaneous processes in which they were at first attained.

This is the tenth parallel.

17. Our inquiry may now be brought to an issue. Can we make good our position, ^{Basis of knowledge.} that our knowledge of God is one of the primary knowledges, which are originated by these spontaneous processes of the mind?

We look in vain to philosophy for an answer to this question. And no wonder. For it seems only of late to have arrived at the conclusion, which now, after ages of wild speculation and dreary discussion, may at length pass for an accepted truth,—that the knowledges of oneself, and of an outward world, are really primary and fundamental, and must be received as such.

Mankind have always gained these knowledges spontaneously, and have held them as true, without questioning them. They have always been as sure of their own existence, as of the world's; and of the world's, as of their own.

Theorists indeed have been found in all times, who would have persuaded us that, in the beginning of our knowledge, we are rightly and truly informed that the world exists; but can regard our own existence, as no more than a modification or phenomenon of the other.

Others, again, have maintained the opposite error, that we have an original, unquestionable knowledge of what, it cannot be denied, is most intimately known,—our own existence; but no certain knowledge of a real,

external world. The world we see, is thus made mere appearance, and no more.

Agés of discussion of these theories, and of the kindred questions upon the origin of knowledge, have made metaphysics,—which should be the philosophy of truths, the highest and the most interesting to man,—another name for baseless and hopeless speculation.

But there are signs of a more settled philosophy. The vagaries of Materialism and Idealism seem, at length, to have corrected

one another. A long experience of the absurdities which always result from the denial of either element of perception, has brought about a general consent, that both knowledges are fundamental and primary; and that the relation of the two elements, in the act of perception, is not only a voucher for their existence to the vulgar mind, but is sufficient ground for their admission as fundamental truths of philosophy. A philosophy is thus established consistent with the common sense of men.

18. This admission, then, simple as it is, is fraught with great results, as it has been attempted to show in these pages. But philosophy must take yet another step, to be on a level with the teaching of nature.

Without reflection, men naturally feel that the two elements of knowledge, which philosophy has at length accorded them, cannot stand face to face with one another, of their own accord. They see that One Being must have adapted the world to themselves,

before they confirm this inference, by observing the plans and adjustments of nature without them.

And reasonably so. The primitive act of perception, which is now admitted to contain a valid testimony to the existence of two beings, may, with equal cogency, assure us that there is a Third Being, Superior to both, and the Cause of their relationship. We have seen repeatedly that all our knowledge of existence depends on the relations of things. The relationship of certain sensations is referred to the unity of an object. The existence of minds is known from certain relations of phenomena. In like manner, the relationship, in every act of perception, between the power of self and that which is not of self, must be ascribed to a real being as cause.

Every perception can be resolved into two distinct feelings,—that of power acting from within, and that of power impressed from without. Each of these powers is attributed to a being, distinct and independent of the other. But the two powers are bound in a certain relationship; and this requires a Cause, as much as the feelings; and this Cause has equal claim with the others, to be acknowledged as a Real Being,—a Being who is seen to be marvellous in Wisdom, as soon as we have observed the many wonderful adaptations, on which the attainment of the perception depends.

Thus *the same fundamental perception, which is the foundation of man's knowledge of himself, as a being dis-*

tinct from the world, discovers also the Existence of a Being, who is Superior to both the world and man.

This is the eleventh parallel.

19. It will throw light on some disputed
 Primary
 experience. and important questions of philosophy, to make prominent the latent and spontaneous processes of the mind, in the attainment of its primary knowledges. We have seen that every perception of an object depends on several sequences of causation. Each simple perception has its causes, in the nervous organism, and external to it. Yet the mind runs through them all; and combines all the simple perceptions, in one perception of an object, or image; and views it as distinct from self,—and all in one simple, indivisible, mental energy; without noticing its own faculties, or their united action; without observing its own secret procedure; or any connexion of the external causes that act upon it.

This spontaneous action of the mind in every perception, is a part of that early communication between itself and the world, in which its knowledge originated. I have proposed to call it the mind's *primary experience*.

It is from the oversight of this primary experience, that the old question,—‘Does all our knowledge originate in experience, or have we higher sources of knowledge?’ is still as unsettled as it ever was.

And it may assist towards the solution of some difficulties, in the perplexed inquiry,—‘What truths are

intuitive, what inferred ?' to notice that the commonest truths are both intuitive and inferred.

20. We may now complete our proposed task, by concluding from what has been advanced, that our knowledge of the Deity, in its total conception, and not merely the first element of it (11th parallel), has its origin in the spontaneous processes of primary experience.

Gives our
knowledge
of the
Deity.

It can hardly be questioned, that as men always gain spontaneously, their knowledges of other minds and of the world, and a certain acquaintance with the character and properties of both,—an acquaintance more or less distinct and extensive, according to their own intellectual progress ; so they have been always prone to the belief in God, and have had conceptions more or less worthy of His Character.

It is one of the difficulties of atheism, to explain the prevalence of such a belief among all people, in all times ; a difficulty not to be overcome by arbitrary assumptions.

Many philosophers, too, hold to the opinion, that the *Idea* or *Conception* of the Deity is natural to man. It is always found in the cultivated mind ; and some rudiments of it in all men, down to the savage. Hence it is often maintained, by those who have noticed the insufficiency of any one Theological argument for the full doctrine of Theism, that this idea or conception of the Infinite Being, is the only safe basis of Theology.

But whence this idea or conception ? Was it born

with man? No: for the mind gains it, in the course of its growth; and only the cultivated mind attains it in its proper significancy.

Is it then communicated by some miraculous revelation? Such a notion would be extravagant, and unnecessary. The principles and processes of intelligence, which account for the knowledges admitted to be intuitive, are sufficient to account for the Theological knowledge. In the perception of an object, the mind refers all the distinct sensations to their causes, and gathers up the several perceptions into one total perception of the body, and views it as distinct from self, and all in one simple indivisible energy of intelligence; and becomes acquainted with objects and with men, before it can observe the method of its own procedure; and acts on its knowledge through life, though it may never resolve it into its elements, nor trace back its course to its commencement.

The knowledge of God may be gained, in like manner, under the teaching of nature, by the spontaneous action of the mind. This knowledge has been shown (1st, 2nd and 6th parallels) to rest on similar phænomena with the other two; although extending over a wider sphere, in the moral, intellectual and emotional nature of man,—where it finds also a foundation peculiarly its own: it is gained in the interpretation of these phænomena by the same principle of reason (3rd and 7th parallels): and through a similar intellectual process (8th parallel): it is similar in its character (4th and

5th parallels): and, as a knowledge of the Infinite, is found to be the necessary complement of all knowledge of the finite, and to be similarly partial and inexact (9th parallel, and Chap. IV.). It has also been seen that our primary experience rests on the same principle of reason (10th parallel); which is there equally valid for the third element of the fundamental perception, as for the other two (11th parallel).

Since then the three knowledges rest on the same principles, and are of the same character; and since the highest is common and natural to the cultivated mind, as well as the other two; it follows that all are given us by the teaching of nature, and have equal claims to be received as valid.

It is thus that our twelfth parallel is made good;—

Our knowledge of ourselves, of men, of material substances, of the Supreme Being, are all natural products of the mind's spontaneous action in its primary experience.

21. It follows from these parallels, that our knowledge of God is not dependent upon proof; but is given us by the Author of our being, in the facts of nature, and in the principles and conditions of our intellectual life. It is therefore rightly held by men, who can give no account of it. Like our other intuitions, it may be verified by reflection, but is not dependent upon the verification; and cannot be doubted without the suicide of reason.

That it is more frequently questioned, is no evidence that it is more reasonably. Of truths equally well

founded, that will always appear most evident, which is most familiar ; and that will become most familiar, in which we are accustomed to take the greatest interest.

The soul is not wholly dependent upon the accidents of society or of education, for the commencement of its life. Under the kind tutelage of nature, it gains, spontaneously, some knowledge of the highest truths accessible to man.

This knowledge is amplified by attention, and attention is within the power of all. It is within the power of all to take care that the gifts of nature shall be fruitful, and that life shall be directed to some good and worthy purpose.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REVELATION OF GOD AND IMMORTALITY IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE MIND.

A TREATISE on the intellectual *principles* of Natural Theology, will not be expected to dwell at length, upon the great truths which are founded upon those principles. It will suffice to enunciate the most important, and to indicate the evidence on which they rest.

1. The facts of man's intellectual and moral nature, are equally obvious and important with the marks of Wise Purpose, seen in the adaptations of the external world. Men of fame as philosophers have even held, that it is from this source we derive the only valid arguments, not only of man's immortality, but even of the *existence* of the Deity¹. It certainly affords valid arguments to both these truths. And though, as we have shown, it is not the only source of our knowledge of God, yet it contains a special and momentous Revelation of His Character, and of His Purpose in placing us here.

¹ So Sir Wm. Hamilton, "Discussions," p. 623, 2nd edit.

2. There is, however, one point in which Fatalism. the doctrine of Theism cannot be completed, without the appeal to the moral nature of man. The former chapters have led us to conclusions inconsistent with every system of Atheism or Pantheism; except that scheme of Fatalism, or Semi-panteism, which ascribes all human agency to an origin in God.

The forces and powers of the material world, in all their applications, may be considered as originated by the Creator, and as perfectly fulfilling His Will. This theory of Necessity carries back the powers of man, with all their applications, to the same Source; and regards them, equally with material forces, as fulfilling the Creator's Will. It is denied that man has, in himself, any original control of the faculties of his nature. He has a consciousness of his powers, matter has not; but both alike, in all their actions, are determined by previous and necessitating causes. It is true, the human consciousness distinctly asserts the Freedom of the Will. But on this point it is illusory. The Will is determined by motives; the motives by previous causes, in circumstances, in education, or in nature; and thus, notwithstanding the acknowledged difference between mental motives and material forces, both are alike necessitated in the system of nature, and man is a mere worthless link in the chain of Fatalism.

On this system, it is evident that the difference between vice and virtue is reduced to mere appearance. Sin is an unmeaning word; for there can be no such

thing as opposition to the Will of God, if all things are equally determined by causes originating in Himself. Thus the existence of evil becomes chargeable on the Creator, and cannot be reconciled with any conception of His Perfect Nature and Attributes.

3. But this theory of fatalism, it must be observed, is a pure assumption. There is no ^{An assumption.} originating power in matter, and there is none in mind : but why mind must be placed thus on a level with matter, no reason whatever can be alleged. And the reasons for the opposite assumption,—reasons as strong as any which lie at the foundation of human knowledge, are arbitrarily set aside as fallacious.

It was long a prevalent opinion, that a conclusive objection to Free-will was found in our inability to comprehend an absolute commencement. It was overlooked that, if there be no absolute commencement, every succession of causes becomes infinite ; and that an infinite chain is, to say the least, as inconceivable as a first cause.

But it has been shown that, though both hypotheses are inconceivable, that of an infinite succession is impossible. It has thus been proved that every series must have commenced, whether its commencement be conceivable or not. The question remains,—Do all series of causes originate in the First Cause of all being ; or is man endowed with a power of commencing new chains of causation, by his own Will ?

4. It is not difficult to see, that this ques- Free-will.

tion must be beyond the sphere of demonstration. But it is decided without demonstration ; and with as much certainty as any demonstration can give. The intuition is as distinct and unquestionable, as any that can be the basis of logical proof,—that the mind possesses a free, originating power of its own, not wholly subordinate to prior causes. Proof is inapplicable on the question of the existence of a mental faculty, but the question is decided by the mind itself. It feels and knows, that it is no mere agent of necessity ; but possesses powers of its own, which it can use or abuse, which it can either employ or neglect.

5. Not that this Free-will is a faculty, by
 Its action. which it can control itself in every action of its life. It may become the slave of habit. But habit is the only moral necessity to which it can be subject. Till the growth of confirmed habit, there is no necessary connexion between motives or feelings, and actions ; for the mind may interpose, after the motive has arisen, and may refuse to obey the feelings. And it is well known, that, whatever the feelings may be, to resist them constantly is gradually to extinguish them. Whether a man will thus contend with his natural inclinations or not, depends, not only on his constitution by nature, or the influence of others in his education, or the force of circumstances, or other causes beyond his control ; but on the use he may himself have made, of the powers of being which God has given him. He may accustom himself to employ his reason, in observation, in reflec-

tion, in retrospection; or he may blindly follow his impulses. Whether or no he is determined, in the course he chooses, by causes beyond himself, admits of no proof. But the mind feels and knows itself to be free from such causes. Hence the self-condemnation, which often overtakes a man after his crime. Hence the blame we attach, and cannot help attaching, to the crimes of others¹.

To say that men cannot help their crimes is thus to make the root of our nature a lie. All knowledge then becomes illusory; all existence, the phantom of a diseased imagination.

It must therefore be assumed that the fact of *Liberty*, like that of existence, is *known intuitively*; though its foundation is hidden from the sight, in the deep nature of the soul.

6. Man can have no more than an infinitely distant, partial, and relative knowledge of the Nature and Character of that

The Divine
Holiness.

Infinite Being, who is the Author of his life. God is

¹ It does not follow that we are to regard a determination of the will as accidental, and consequently morally worthless, because it is not decided by prior causes. No doubt the actions of men who have no settled habits, will appear outwardly as the results of mere chance. But this is only the expression of our ignorance. The mind, in its own consciousness, *seeks* no prior cause of its actions, but is satisfied to regard itself as a *first*, original cause; though always within certain limits and restrictions. Its freedom is felt as the liberty of applying or misapplying, and that continually, the essential powers of its being. To regard its decision as morally worthless, is inconsistent with its clearest intuitions.

known by His Agency in the world. He is also known by His Agency in the soul of man. It is here that we learn what, of all things, it is most important to us to know,—the Character of the Creator *in His dealings with us*, and His Purpose in our human life.

The HOLINESS of the Deity, in His dealings
Shown in the with man, is shown in the moral nature and
moral nature. life of the soul.

Besides the Freedom of the Will, a fundamental principle of the moral constitution is the *Sense of Duty*. Man is not moved by mere sensible impulses; but is capable of feeling that there are things which it is his duty to do, others which he ought to leave undone. This feeling of duty is often deeper than any reference to self-interest or public utility, to good taste or custom, or any law of man. It corresponds to the mind's spontaneous knowledge of the Supreme Creator.

We may be sure that He, who has made all things with Wisdom, intends this specific faculty of the soul to have its use. It may be applied in opposite ways. A being endowed with powers of life and action, and living in the society of others, may direct his conduct towards good or ill. We cannot conceive how it could have been otherwise, without taking away from man the essential powers of his existence.

The proper use of the faculties is to be learnt from the constitution of the mind, and from the effects of various feelings and actions upon itself and others.

7. The effects of various feelings and actions upon itself, are seen in the feelings ^{In individuals.} themselves, in the moral judgments, and in the habits. Without here dwelling on, what are important truths of moral science, the approbation or condemnation of Conscience in the moral judgments, the happiness of virtuous, the wretchedness of vicious affections; it may suffice to instance the happiness of habitual goodness, and the sure misery and degradation of vice and baseness.

A man can hardly fail to see, by the course of depravity in himself, and its manifest results in others, that it is nothing else than the suicide of the soul, in its best feelings and aspirations. Vice draws a man farther than he intended. If, for a time, the excitements of pleasure, or the pride of success give life to the spirits, and stifle all remorse; yet he may see, when he dare look into himself, that the best and happiest feelings of his nature are dying away; and that his success, or his excitements, are too dearly bought by falsehood to himself, and the sacrifice of his soul. He can never rise above the feeling, that he has found no worthy purpose in life. His course begins in the perversion of the Divine Law and Purpose; and ends with the feeling, that there is no purpose in the life of man; and that the Creator of this marvellous universe, who has known so well how to adapt all His lower and material creatures to their ends, becomes chargeable with folly in the crea-

ture of highest endowments, whom He has made for naught.

Opposite, in its whole progress, is the course of virtue and goodness. They who have been most competent to speak, have always confessed it to impart a happiness more than human. But in an argument which appeals to the feelings, it may suffice to state, what will need no proof, or will be beyond proof, that the highest and clearest revelation of the Character and the Purpose of God towards man, is in the soul which has become God-like in itself.

And in
society. 8. The immediate effects, and remote consequences, of virtuous or vicious actions and habits upon human society, are no less important to be noticed. Man cannot isolate himself from his fellow-men. His actions must have their influence beyond himself. The depraved and selfish affections, which torment the soul that harbours them, are the pests of all who come in contact with them, and the source of confusion to mankind. The vices which debase the individual tend to the degeneracy of the race.

Thus the debased condition of certain tribes of men, which has often been alleged against the truths of morals, in fact bears testimony to these truths. The only witnesses against them are those whose evidence may be declined. The only men who pay no deference to a Moral Law, are those who are manifestly debased beneath the nature of man. Thus it appears that, as in individuals, so in mankind, moral degeneracy carries

with it universal degeneracy. Thus it appears that the very feelings, and acts, and habits, which are wretched in themselves and degrading to the soul, are fraught with mischief to society, and tend to the degeneracy of the race; while the feelings, and acts, and habits, which are opposite in all their influences on the man, are opposite in their present effects, and in their remote consequences to mankind.

We thus learn, with a certainty which becomes the more evident, the more it is considered, that we are the creatures of a Holy Creator, who has made it the condition of our own well-being, that we shall have regard to the well-being of others; and who deals with us according to a law, which subordinates the happiness of the individual to the harmony of all creation.

9. There are also feelings and principles in the soul, which indicate the Purpose of God to draw men to Himself, as well as to bind them to one another. In the feelings.

The Mind, in the spontaneous action of its Reason, recognises Him as the Creator of the universe; but it has also feelings, which give it an interest in the contemplation of His works.

As it looks on the beauties of nature, it feels them adapted to its *Sense of the Beautiful*, and may be drawn to venerate Him, as the Source of all beauty and perfection. While it directs its attention to the more sublime and majestic aspects of creation,—while its *Sense of the Marvellous* is excited by the marks of His Agency in

the deep immensity of the starry heavens, or by the Geological records of its continuance, through periods beyond measure, in this little earth,—it is able to bow with awful reverence before Him whom it acknowledges as Infinite beyond all extension, Eternal beyond all duration.

10. But can its awe be mingled with affection towards Him, as a Father? Can it trust Him as Benevolent to His creatures? The soul of man is undeniably capable of such feelings. The grateful mind returns thanks, with a glad heart, for many blessings of life which are bestowed on all. The good and generous and high-minded spirit may rise, in the happiness of well-doing, to the peace of God, which passeth understanding; and, assured in its own feelings, of the affectionate regard of an All-good Benefactor, is moved to worship Him with affection.

But does the same Benevolence extend to all? Have all the creatures the means of goodness and happiness within their reach? We can here but touch upon the mysterious question of evil, which, in all times, has engaged some of the deepest and most anxious thoughts of men. God, it is evident, is not that Pure and Simple Benevolence, which seeks the happiness of men, without regard to their conduct and character. He is not the Creator of one creature, but of many: and the laws of His universe must aim at the general welfare of all. The very laws of man's being bring misery to the vicious and unprincipled.

But this is no solution of the mystery of evil. For, it may be asked, do not the laws of nature bring misery to the virtuous? Have not these to bear their share of the ills of life, and often to endure them for the vices of others, who contrive to avert suffering by greater villainy?

Trust in God is often the only answer to such questions. Under the many afflictions and ills of time, it will often fare hardly with the soul, that has not learnt to trust in God, and to look with confidence to the future. Let it suffice here to state, what I have proved elsewhere, by arguments which cannot be answered, that if man be incompetent to solve completely the mystery of the sin and misery which covers the earth, yet even all the wrongs, and all the sufferings of life cannot, by any ingenuity of scepticism, be pressed into a disparagement of the Divine Goodness.

God is too great to refuse His creatures any happiness which can tend to their ultimate advantage. He is too Holy, as conscience testifies, to delight in suffering, or even to permit it without purpose: too Powerful, as the creation bears witness, not to be able to work His Will: too Wise, as all His works declare, not to know better than we can, what laws of creation will tend to the welfare of the whole, and what condition of life will be most to the advantage of every soul of man.

He is Great and Powerful, He is Wise and Holy; and He is Eternal and Infinite, beyond conception. Can He then be otherwise than Good?

The difficulties which may be raised upon this question cannot shake the truths of Theology; however they may prove our incompetency, in this life of time, to unfold the Mystery of Infinite Wisdom, or to trace the deep ways of God, in the accomplishment of Eternal Purposes.

11. One conclusion, however, may be
 Evidences of Immor-
 tality. drawn with certainty from the ills of life.
 Man is not created for the present only, but

has a higher destiny in the future. The Stoical morality may have amused lofty spirits, who knew not sorrow; but it has not searched the deep afflictions of mankind. A virtuous and noble mind may endure sufferings with dignity, and is yet more ennobled by them, when it does. But to little purpose, if the corruption of death must presently level it with the basest and meanest of men.

Every part of the mental constitution bears testimony to the truth of immortality. But we must interpret the obvious facts of our intellectual and moral nature, by the principle of intelligent purpose, which we have found to be universal in the creation without. If we have confidence in that Wisdom, which has adapted all things visible to their ends, and believe that it cannot have become chargeable with folly in the constitution of man—its best and noblest work; we may then find, in the capacities and aspirations of the mind, the proofs of what we are fitted to be, and may receive them as evidences of what we shall be.

These evidences may be drawn :—

I. From the necessity of a future life, to any possible solution of the mystery of evil, in the universe of an All-powerful, All-good Creator. If there be no hereafter, the sorrows and sufferings of life are distributed without rule or purpose. Also,

II. To solve the inconsistency between Perfect Justice, and the frequent success of moral evil in the world. The iniquity which is successful to the end of life, is, in effect, triumphant, if there be no retribution to follow. Then the law of justice within the soul, is a barren effort of nature, an aim without an end.

But the laws and forces of the material creation, stable and efficient in a million spheres, and through a million ages, may convince man that no law of nature can be impotent; and that to resist those which are found within the narrow sphere of his own agency, must tend to some ulterior consequences. The laws of the soul may be transgressed, but cannot be expected to be more fruitless than those of body.

Their results then must be hereafter, since they are but partially accomplished in the present.

III. We find indications of immortality in the attachments of the benevolent affections. These are differently developed in different persons; but are capable of a meaning and a force, which is beyond what can be necessary for any utilitarian purpose of life. The feelings, deeper than reasoning, have many a time received the conviction of immortality by the grave of an

attached friend. At such a moment man may sometimes see, that strong affections of his nature must have been given him for nothing, if they are awakened to life, presently to become the instruments of sorrow, in the anguish of a separation for evermore.

This evidence will have different weight with different minds ; but none can deny that the heart is capable of feelings, which are bitterly afflicted, when the attachments of life are severed, and cling with eagerness to the expectation of their renewal.

IV. The mere ability to look forward to a future without end, creates an expectation of the future. This faculty also goes far beyond any exigencies of life. Man might have been as inventive, and as provident, in all the arts which have been found so useful, though he had had no power of looking beyond a few years ; and though the thick, black curtain of death, had cut off all conception, and all desire, as it cuts off all knowledge of a hereafter.

And the difference is remarkable, between our ability to form conceptions of future duration, and our utter inability to conceive the past. We have no difficulty in imagining endless periods in a life to come ; for the future can never be complete. But all past duration is completed. The mind cannot be satisfied to go backward from period to period, and to conceive it indefinitely prolonged, as it does the future ; but is compelled to affirm it either finite or infinite. And yet it can form no conception of either. We have seen that reason is

rescued from contradiction, in its view of the past, only by ascribing the finite, for its origin, to the Infinite. Thus the past eternity belongs to God alone ; the future can be thought of and expected by man.

V. The continuance of those pure and noble pleasures, which spring from the employment of the mind in its appropriate pursuits, is another evidence of immortality. It is a rule of nature, that the right use of all the powers, whether of mind or body, is attended with pleasure. The happiness of the young consists chiefly in movement and sensation, and is the incentive to that attention and action, in their early communication with the world, which are so essential to the attainment of knowledge and experience. But it continues in a comparatively slight degree, or ceases altogether, when the physical powers have attained their proper development. The full-grown man has no pleasure in mere movement without purpose, or in vision without reference to the object, or in talking without intelligence.

But the pleasures of the mind are unfailing. The sense of the beautiful may have its gratification, as long as life continues, and only becomes more refined and susceptible with experience. The same remark applies to the pleasures of the intellect, in the pursuits of science. The mind is never weary of their renewal. Larger acquirements of knowledge, new discoveries of the works of God, never fail to bring the highest enjoyment to the thoughtful.

The complacency of the moral feelings, the inward

peace of the moral life, are no less permanent; and, to the end of life, are the chief and highest happiness of which the soul is capable.

As then the pleasures of common sensation or action, continue only till the bodily powers have attained their growth, while those of the mind accompany it to the end of life; we have here an indication that the mental powers never, in this state, attain their full and perfect growth. When all the feelings of sensation are fast decaying, the mind is as susceptible as ever, of its pure and noble pleasures: and if, in extreme old age, it seem, at length, to share the torpor of the body, yet a moment's enthusiasm at some striking event will often prove that all its life is there, though the windows of its prison-walls are darkened. Is not this an evidence that it will survive the body? To the most of men the best pleasures of intellect and feeling are unknown, and all feel themselves capable of a higher happiness of knowledge and of goodness, than they attain on earth. Must not this higher happiness be attainable in another state?

VI. But this observation, on the pleasures of the intellectual and moral powers, is closely connected with another, on the extent of these powers themselves. They never, in this life, attain that knowledge, or that perfection, of which they are capable.

To one unaccustomed to observation and thought, there seems but little to be learnt. The shallowest mind takes in all nature at a glance. The stars are hung in

the heavens, and the earth produces its fruits and flowers, and men are born and die ; and this is all that can be known. And many a system of atheism has been founded on no deeper philosophy.

But when the mind has been opened by education, it finds more in nature than it saw at first. As it advances in knowledge, it gains a higher conception of the unknown ; and, at its utmost progress, confesses the unknown to be so vast and profound, that it has picked up but a few pebbles from its shore. Thus to know that we can know nothing, is ever the highest achievement of knowledge.

A similar remark applies again to the moral powers. When they have been quelled by vice, or lie dormant through neglect, the mind sees no difference between good and evil. Men have their feelings, and dispositions, and powers of action ; they are placed in various circumstances ; they act in various ways ; and this is all that can be known.

But when the mind has been opened by reflection, it finds more in its own moral world, than it saw at first. Virtue and vice are no longer mere forms or names. And the closer its attention to itself, and the more careful its action, the more widely they appear separated. It is a fact of no uncommon experience, that they who, by the endeavours of a long life, have striven for their advancement in God-like qualities, have always confessed themselves to have grown more and more sensible of their imperfections, and have constantly aspired to a

perfection of holiness beyond them. Thus a work never to be completed, is found, on attention, where at first there seemed nothing to be done.

VII. By these thoughts, and such as these, men have, in all ages, been directed to a hereafter. They have looked forward to a future state, not in the coldness of speculative inquiry, but with hope or fear for themselves. That the hope of immortality has been so widely spread, even under the false religions of the world, is a strong evidence that it is well founded; as the universality of the belief in God is a testimony to its truth.

The grounds of this hope may be briefly summed up. The belief in God is almost universal, and the evidences we have just recounted, unite to show that the life present is a School. It is one of its inevitable conditions, that, on an average, more than one-half of its duration is spent in learning, how we are to live during the other half. But not for this purpose alone, if to learn be the one great end of life. Childhood and manhood are then but parts of one course, and tend to one and the same end.

That Wise Power, Who has made all things, and adapted all things to their ends, and, through the changes and progressions of ages, has carried them on, with patient determination, to results so harmonious, that all must have been pre-determined from the first,—that same Wise Power is the Creator of the souls of men.

These then are adapted to their ends. And they are

endowed with Reason, to discover the Creator in His works, and to perceive that the sufferings, the strife, the exertions of life, must tend to some worthy results; with feelings directed towards immortality, with aspirations to desire it; with capabilities of enjoyment, beyond what falls to them here, and which seem never to decay; with faculties of knowledge and of goodness ever reaching beyond themselves.

He who has given these faculties and capacities to the soul, is able also to give them their objects. So far as our knowledge of the creation extends, we find every where that nothing is grudged, nothing superfluous. Can we think then that superfluous feelings or powers have been communicated to the mind, or that the Creator will grudge to it its highest and best desires? Is the vastness of the creation spread out before our eyes, to raise aspirations, and to excite desires, which are doomed only to disappointment and to death? If we are destined to no life beyond the present, why have we thoughts which can look to an endless future, and eyes to see the unapproachable glories of creation in the firmament above? The stars speak to us of immortality, and invite us to advanced knowledge of Divine Power in the life to come.

Concluding then that that life will be given us, is it not a life to be desired? Our present faculties can discern but a little portion, even of that vastness of power, which they can see to be extended beyond us, in all directions. But the field of knowledge is immensely

enlarged, when we look, in imagination, *beyond* those relations of things to one another, and to the sensation-faculties, and to the present conditions of the mind's action, in which all possible knowledge is now bound and confined.

Infinite manifestations of power, infinite depths of Wisdom, Holiness and Love, must lie between the creature of yesterday, and Him who is from everlasting to everlasting.

But to limit the speculation to one topic. Of all the pursuits which can engage the mind, none are more interesting than the history of past events, the career of great men, the changing destinies of humanity. But a more interesting history is yet hidden in the womb of time: more wonderful events, a more marvellous progression, must be found in the fulfilment of God's Purpose in His universal Empire, and in the society of all the souls He has created.

The material world, in its various substances, is His work. His purpose is seen in the adaptations of the parts, and in the harmony of the whole. It will be seen also in the harmony of a moral and intellectual universe, as well as in the powers of its individual members.

We find a constant subject of study and admiration in the laws and properties of the material world, even in those of any one substance: much more, when we take account of all the relations of the various parts of nature, and all the changes and progressions of ages past.

But the mind also may afford, to those who reflect, a constant subject of study and of admiration. Its powers are more marvellous than those of any material substance, more marvellous—may we not say?—than all the powers and all the relations of the visible universe. How much more wonderful, how much more worthy of our highest ambition, to see the fulfilment of God's Purpose, in the future destinies of a Kingdom founded by Himself.

A little attention discovers, that the world of matter has existed during many ages; while that of mind is but in its infancy. Over a large portion of the earth, the mind is wrapt in the darkness of barbarism: and, in more favoured places, how much it is bound in ignorance, prejudice and vice, we need not say.

But there is a Divine Purpose in the mental, as in the material world.

There was a Purpose of God, which saw things afar off, when the world was Chaos; when earth, air and sea were mingled in the strife of elements, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

But out of the fiery tempest has come forth that harmonious system of nature which supports the baobab through thousands of years, and the snowdrop of a day. One agent of nature, which was once but an element of fire, is now the breath of life to man. So faculties as yet unknown and inconceivable, lie hidden in the deep nature of the soul.

Wonderful, and well deserving our study, are the

changes and progressions of this earth. More wonderful, and yet more worthy of our thoughts, during ages to come, will be the fulfilment of the Creator's Purpose, in the society of all the spirits He has created.

It was no part of our subject to inquire how far Natural Religion may have been indebted to Revealed: but it was for the fulfilment of that Purpose, that the Eternal Son of God has lived and died as a Man.

THE END.





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